"MIDNIGHT COWBOY"

Screenplay

by

Waldo Salt

Based on a Novel

by

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Producer: Jerome Hellman

Director: John Schlesinger

A JEROME HELLMAN-JOHN SCHLESINGER PRODUCTION

MIDNIGHT COWBOY

1. INT. TV STUDIO DAY

A Susskind-type MODERATOR is speaking into camera:

MODERATOR
Tonight we'll discuss a subject most of us seem to consider either bad taste or frivolous or funny. But if our experts are right, we face what might be called a masculinity crisis. Every fourth American man uptight, threatened by the increasing sexual demands of American women...

2. EXT. SIDEWALK INTERVIEW DAY

An IRATE WOMAN speaks into camera:

IRATE WOMAN
They always put it that way, but well, all it means, you know, is every fourth American woman's never satisfied. That's it. I never am -- have been, you know...

3. EXT. SIDEWALK INTERVIEW DAY

A COOL WOMAN speaks into camera:

COOL WOMAN
This, this image of the, the man-eating woman. It isn't our increasing demands. I think it's the shrinking American male...

4. EXT. SIDEWALK INTERVIEW DAY

A SAD WOMAN speaks into camera:

4. CONTINUED

SAD WOMAN
No, I never had, well, whatever it is you call it. But the hours he works, I can't blame him...

5. INT. CAFETERIA SCULLERY (TEXAS) DAY

Full frame -- a scandal sheet picture of a sex-starved wife, naked while her husband sleeps, captioned I BUY WHAT MY HUSBAND CAN'T GIVE.

SAD WOMAN'S VOICE
...but it's a problem. A big problem. With so many women I know...

Camera pulls back to show the picture among other pinups of women -- rich, beautiful or naked, but all blonde -- steam-wilted on the wall over a dishwashing machine. JOE BUCK grins at the wall as he scrapes garbage.

JOE
Just keep your pants on, ladies...

6. MULTIPLE SPLIT SCREEN

A LADY COMMENTATOR, gradually surrounded by lonely women...

BEAUTY PARLOR

FASHION SHOW

PSYCHIATRIST'S COUCH

COCKTAIL BAR

GYMNASIUM

STATUE OF LIBERTY

LADY COMMENTATOR
Before World War One -- American men outnumbered women by over six percent. Today American women not only outnumber men, but live five years longer -- leaving them in control of vast corporate wealth and seventy-five percent of America's purchasing power...

6. CONTINUED

The Lady Commentator is replaced by Joe, stacking dishes, surrounded by frustrated ladies. He laughs tolerantly.

JOE
Y'all line up and take your turn...

7. INT. TV STUDIO DAY

The Moderator smiles into camera.

MODERATOR
My question is this -- will American know-how come up with a marketable male to replace all the men who are worrying themselves into an early grave over women's increasing sexual demands?

8. INT. STALL SHOWER DAY

Joe sings as he soaps himself, "Whoopee ti yi yo, git along little dogies, for you know New York will be your new home!" Sound and image freeze on Joe's open mouth.

SUPERIMPOSED MAIN TITLE AND CREDITS

TITLES follow as indicated, sound and action continuing after each credit.

9. INT. SUNSHINE CAFETERIA DAY

Joe's song continues over a sweating WAITRESS, glancing up.

WAITRESS
Where's that Joe Buck?

10. INT. HOTEL ROOM DAY

Wrapped in a towel, singing in front of his dresser mirror, Joe sprays himself with deodorant, aiming a last playful blast at the unseen crotch -- freezing song and image as CREDITS continue over...

...a calendar girl on the wall blushing orange, mouth frozen in a tiny O, staring wide-eyed. Joe's song continues as...

...Joe rips the wrapping from a new Stetson and sets it on his head, freezing song and image as CREDITS continue.

11. INT. CAFETERIA SCULLERY DAY

RALPH, an aging black man, faces a mountain of dirty dishes.

RALPH
Where's that Joe Buck?

12. INT. HOTEL ROOM DAY

Singing as he buttons his new cowboy shirt, Joe interrupts himself to answer Ralph...

JOE
Yeah, where's that Joe Buck?

...continuing his song as he pulls up and zips his tight-thighed black slacks, freezing song and image for CREDITS.

13. INT. REMEMBERED BEAUTY PARLOR ANOTHER TIME

SALLY BUCK, a pretty middle-aged blonde, smiles down at camera.

SALLY BUCK
You look real nice, Joe baby...

14. INT. HOTEL ROOM DAY

Joe sings as he pulls on his new cowboy boots, arranging his cuffs to show off the yellow sunburst at the ankle, freezing song and image for CREDITS.

15. INT. SUNSHINE CAFETERIA DAY

The pink MANAGER scowls at his pocket watch.

MANAGER
Where's that Joe Buck?

16. INT. HOTEL ROOM DAY

Joe hums as he piles a complete wardrobe of cowboy clothes, still in their wrappers, into a shiny new suitcase of black and white horsehide.

JOE
Yeah, where's that Joe Buck?

17. INT. SUNSHINE CAFETERIA DAY

Holding his watch, the Manager wags a finger at camera.

MANAGER
You're due here at four o'clock.
Look at those dishes, look!

18. INT. HOTEL ROOM DAY

Joe laughs as he locks his suitcase.

JOE
Know what you can do with those dishes? And if you ain't man enough to do it yourself, I'd be happy to oblige...

Joe picks up his suitcase, a portable transistor radio, walks away from the mirror, then pauses to run a comb through his

18. CONTINUED

hair, hook a cigarette at the corner of his mouth and strike a match on his thumbnail before he turns back for one admiring glance at himself in the mirror -- proud, exultant, ready -- freezing the image as CREDITS END.

19. EXT. TEXAS TOWN MAIN STREET DAY

Joe leaves the hotel, carrying his suitcase.

20. INT. CAFETERIA SCULLERY DAY

The pink Manager points at his watch angrily.

MANAGER
Four to midnight, understand?

Angle widens to include Joe, holding his suitcase and radio. Ralph stares at him curiously, stacking dishes.

JOE
Say, look, uh, I gotta have a word with you, if you got a second.

MANAGER
Later. Later maybe.

The Manager hurries away, carrying a basket of dishes.

RALPH
You ain't coming to work?

JOE
Don't guess. Just come for my day's pay owing and to tell you I'm heading East.

Joe tilts his Stetson as the Waitress appears at the door...

WAITRESS
Cups!

20. CONTINUED

...but she disappears without noticing Joe. Ralph offers his hand. Joe takes it, holds it.

RALPH
What you gonna do back there, East?

JOE
Lotta rich women back there...

RALPH
Yeah?

JOE
Men, they mostly faggots.

RALPH
Must be some mess back there.

JOE
Well, ain't no use hanging around here.

RALPH
Ain't gonna collect your pay?

JOE
I got me two hundred twenty-four bucks of flat folding money...
(slaps hip)
He know what he can do with that chickenshit day's pay. And if he ain't man enough to do it for himself, I be happy to oblige!

21. INT. SUNSHINE CAFETERIA DAY

The door marked EMPLOYEES ONLY swings open and Joe appears, measuring his effect on the customers and his fellow employees as he crosses the sterile white dining room, observing the drab details of the life he has left behind -- garbage on greasy dishes, limp food in steam table trays,

21. CONTINUED

coffee-soaked cigarette butts, caked mustard and catsup on formica table tops -- two pimply high school girls slurping suggestive noises after Joe through the straws of empty coke glasses. O.S. a Tiomkin-tradition chorus sings, "From this valley they say you are going -- we will miss your bright eyes and sweet smile -- for they say you are taking the sunshine..."

22. EXT. TEXAS TOWN MAIN STREET DAY

The song ends as Joe comes from the cafeteria "...that brightened our pathway a while."

JOE
Tough tiddy, ladies, you had your chance.

From a high angle -- Joe starts his long walk toward the bus depot along the street of a small Western town struggling to urbanize itself. The click-clack-click of his boots is loud but somehow lonely. The radio at his ear drones grain prices on the Commodity Exchange. Joe's pace slows as he passes...

23. EXT. SALLY BUCK'S BEAUTY SALON DAY

...a gilt-lettered sign in the window, glittering in the sun, momentarily hiding the fact that the shop is deserted. Joe grins as he hears remembered sounds and voices -- incomplete flashes, more significant in tone than content -- a girl giggling sexily -- "Keep your meat hooks off my beauty operators, sugar" -- tinkling noises of a busy beauty parlor -- Sally Buck singing "Hush, little baby, don't say a word, Grammaw gonna buy you a mockingbird..."

...a shift of light revealing a row of tarnished driers, a broken mirror, a FOR RENT sign in the window. Joe turns toward the bus depot, radio pressed to his ear.

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE
Benson and Hedges One Hundreds makes special awards from time to time for anything that's longer than anything...

23. CONTINUED

JOE
Care to get out your yardstick, gentlemen?

At the same moment, a recognizable variant of the "Big Country" theme blares loud.

24. INTERCUT WESTERN FILM CLIP

Gary Cooper (or John Wayne) walks a frontier street.

25. EXT. BUS DEPOT DAY

High angle of the departing bus, intercut "Big Country" fashion, alternating high shots with closeups of the bus wheels.

26. EXT. FREEWAY CLOVERLEAF DAY

Through the bus windshield -- a dizzying montage of traffic lines, arrows and signs as the bus sweeps around and up onto the freeway.

27. INT. BUS DAY

Joe sits at the front, opposite the driver, cracking his gum as he watches the huge billboards streaking by, promising him power, happiness and beautiful women if he chooses the right breakfast food, hair oil or automobile. Joe listens to the humming tires, the roar of the engine, shaking his head.

JOE
This is a powerful mothah, ain't it?

Ignored by the driver, Joe rises and walks back to his empty double seat, glancing around to see what impression he's made on his immediate fellow travelers -- an OLD LADY in front of him -- a hostile young sailor with acne behind him -- two teeny-boppers flirting with Joe hysterically -- a PALE BLONDE directly across the aisle, smiling at Joe weakly.

27. CONTINUED

PALE BLONDE
Do you have a stick of gum?

Joe leans across, snapping his gum as he offers her a stick. He watches her nibble it daintily on her front teeth.

PALE BLONDE
Thank you.

JOE
Plenty more where that came from.

PALE BLONDE
Thank you, no, it's just till the Dramamine works. I get carsick.

JOE
I only get carsick on boats.
(waits, then)
But seems to me that's more the fish smell than the bouncing...

Joe realizes that her eyes are closed. Mildly depressed, he stretches himself across both seats and turns on his radio, finds only static and snaps it off. Further depressed, he examines his reflection in the bus window, squeezes a blackhead and runs the comb through his hair, picks a piece of tobacco off his tooth and lights a cigarette, watching the flame die in reflection, forgetting to discard the burnt-out match as he stares out at a vast lonely prairie, a solitary cowboy in the distance, a row of sharecropper shacks apparently deserted, a barefoot little girl motionless at the roadside, watching the bus pass. Through this, leading into the next scene, Sally Buck sings softly "...if that mockingbird don't sing, Grammaw gonna buy you a golden ring..."

28. INT. REMEMBERED BEAUTY SALON ANOTHER TIME

Sally Buck, relaxing in the middle of a busy day, eyes closed wearily while Little Joe massages her neck. Her song continues over the noises of the busy beauty parlor "...if that

28. CONTINUED

golden ring turns brass, Grammaw gonna buy you a looking-glass..."

SALLY BUCK
No, a little lower, sugar, yeah, yeah, that's good. Grammaw's beat.

SALESMAN'S VOICE
You gotta sell yourself, that's the whole trick...

29. INT. BUS DAY

A seedy TRAVELING SALESMAN with badly-fitted dentures and a frayed collar has taken the aisle seat next to Joe. As he lectures Joe on salesmanship, he figures his expenses in a worn leatherette notebook, nervous fingers and eyes unconsciously revealing the extent of his failure.

SALESMAN
It ain't the product and it ain't the price, no sir, and it ain't what you sell, it's personality, pure and simple. I ain't shined my own shoes or shaved my own face in forty years, how's that? Not bad for a kid that didn't pass the eighth grade, right?

JOE
Yeah, hell, yeah.

SALESMAN
And that's my golden rule. Make 'em love you. Put yourself over and you can sell them anything. If they like you, they'll buy horsemeat for prime beef...

30. INT. REMEMBERED BEAUTY SALON ANOTHER TIME

A gawky, adolescent Joe sits sprawled on the couch, leafing through a magazine while Sally Buck bleaches the roots of a

30. CONTINUED

young woman's hair.

SALLY BUCK
You get him to the church, honey. He ain't gonna find out you ain't a real blonde till after you're married, then's too late.

Sally Buck turns, pretending to be stern as Joe laughs.

SALLY BUCK
You getting too big for your britches, sugar.

31. EXT. HIGHWAY NIGHT

The headlights of the bus flash past a huge sign, painted on the slant roof of a barn: JESUS SAVES.

32. INT. BUS NIGHT

Joe is alone again. The Salesman has disappeared. The bus is dark, most passengers trying to sleep. Only one reading light still burns, over the head of the Old Lady in the seat ahead of Joe. Joe squirms, restless, trying to lull himself to sleep with the music of a revivalist gospel group on the radio.

SALLY BUCK'S VOICE
Don't forget to say your prayers, honey...

Joe leans forward to help the Old Lady, irritably struggling with the release button on her seat. She scowls as Joe leans over to release her seat, then pulls her blanket around her and turns away from him. Joe switches off her reading light.

OLD LADY
I want it on.

Joe switches it on again, fakes a good-natured grin, settles back with his radio, aware of an OLD COWHAND seated opposite

32. CONTINUED

him, replacing the Pale Blonde. The Old Cowhand is appraising Joe's wardrobe curiously. He looks away when he sees Joe watching him. Joe settles back, unable to think of a way to open a conversation.

EVANGELIST'S VOICE
Oh, my friends, I say unto you, invest with Jesus, put your dollars to work where they'll pay off at compound interest. The Good Book says money answereth all things...

The Old Cowhand has rolled himself a cigarette. Joe quickly lights a match on his thumb and holds it across the aisle.

JOE
Light?

The Old Cowhand's "thanks" is lost in a fit of coughing as he inhales his first drag. He settles back, wiping his watery eyes on a faded bandana.

EVANGELIST'S VOICE
...everyone who sends a dollar to the Evangelical Congregation of the Air will get free gratis a genuine leatherette hymn book so you can sing along with Sister Rosella and the Evangelical Choir...

JOE
You throw in Sister Rosella and you got a deal, right, old timer?

Joe glances across the aisle. The Old Cowhand manages a faint, humorless smile.

JOE
Going far?

OLD COWHAND
Up the line. Not far.

32. CONTINUED

JOE
I'm bound for New York City.

The Old Cowhand reappraises Joe's wardrobe even more curiously.

JOE
Ever happen to come across a cowman name of Woodsy Niles? Friend of my grammaw Sally Buck...

The Old Cowhand considers, shakes his head. Joe leans back, laughing to himself.

33. INT. REMEMBERED BEDROOM ANOTHER TIME

Little Joe's head is lost in a beatup cowboy hat, similar to the one worn by the Old Cowhand. Sally Buck smiles on WOODSY NILES -- a long-legged cowboy with a shock of black hair -- who stands at her dressing table, admiring himself in a new Stetson.

SALLY BUCK
Like it, honey? Does it fit?

WOODSY
You do me good, Sal, you do me real good. You know what I gonna give you for that Stetson?

Woodsy grabs Sally Buck, lifting her off her feet, carrying her to the bed. Struggling, they fall across the covers together, Little Joe laughing with them.

SALLY BUCK
Woodsy Niles! The boy!

WOODSY
He don't know what makes little apples by now, it's time he found out.

34. INT. BUS NIGHT

Joe shakes his head, grinning, offering the Old Cowhand a cigarette.

JOE
Smoke?

The Old Cowhand shakes his head, showing the rolled cigarette Joe lit for him. Joe nods, still bemused.

35. INT. REMEMBERED BEDROOM ANOTHER TIME

Little Joe is cuddled in Sally Buck's arms, under the covers, watching Woodsy, sitting cross-legged on the bed, naked except for his Stetson and guitar, singing drunkenly.

WOODSY
...git along little dogies!

36. EXT. MIDWEST TOWN MORNING

From a high angle -- the bus slows to a stop.

37. INT. BUS MORNING

Joe awakens, stiff-necked, momentarily confused. He straightens in his seat as he sees the Old Cowhand lifting a sweat-stained saddle down from the overhead rack, starting toward the front of the bus. Joe calls after him.

JOE
Nice talking to you, old timer.

Joe stuffs a stick of gum in his mouth, turns to wave at the Old Cowhand through the window as the bus pulls away.

WOODSY'S VOICE
She-dogs squat, boy. He-dogs stand up and lift their leg...

38. INT. REMEMBERED MEN'S ROOM ANOTHER TIME

Woodsy, in his new Stetson, watches Little Joe in his beatup cowboy hat, trying to balance on one foot, one leg lifted in front of the trough. Woodsy roars with laughter.

WOODSY
...but he-men stand and shoot from the hip.

39. INT. BUS RESTROOM DAY

Joe laughs, flushes, checks his hair in the mirror.

40. EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

The bus streaks past a brightly-colored billboard -- IN NEW YORK, A WELCOME AWAITS YOU AT THE TIMES SQUARE PALACE HOTEL!

41. INT. BUS DAY

Joe is now sitting in the wide rear seat, between two young MARINES and a group of VETERANS wearing campaign caps and convention buttons, passing a bottle, singing "From the Halls of Montezuma to the Shores of Tripoli..." Joe follows the conversation between a VETERAN and a MARINE, participating only because he's sitting beside them, adopting a remembered military stance.

VETERAN
Ever stationed at Kennedy? Those Florida chicks...

MARINE
Instant V-goddam-D.

VETERAN
This Pensacola teeny-bopper -- jail bait -- but built? Ten bucks she wanted. Three of us made a deal for twenty-five, see, big goddam bargain?

41. CONTINUED

MARINE
Big peni-goddam-cillin bargain, right?

VETERAN
You got it.

MARINE
No. You got it.

JOE
Jesus goddam Christ, I ain't laughed so hard since I was out at Fort Benning, Georgia.

MARINE
Did you make the Viet?

JOE
What? Oh, hell no. Motor pool mostly...
(shakes his head)
Kee-rist...

42. INT. REMEMBERED WHOREHOUSE ANOTHER TIME

A plump, aging PROSTITUTE laughs up into camera.

PROSTITUTE
Hey, hey, what you try to do to me? You gonna cost me money, soldier!

43. INT. BUS DAY

Joe laughs as he passes the bottle, trying to sing along without knowing the words as the Veterans segue into "Over hill, over dale, we will hit the dusty trail, as the caissons go rolling along..."

44. INT. REMEMBERED BEAUTY SALON ANOTHER TIME

Sally Buck fondly wipes lipstick from Joe's lips.

SALLY BUCK
Keep your meat hooks off my operators, sugar, hear?

45. INT. BUS DAY

Joe slaps one of the Veterans on the back, trying to follow the song into "Off we go, into the wild blue yonder..."

46. INT. REMEMBERED MOVIE HOUSE ANOTHER TIME

ANASTASIA clutches a younger Joe, eyes wild, gasping.

ANASTASIA
You're the only one, Joe, the only, only one ever!

47. INT. BUS DAY

Joe is leaning across the two Marines, staring out of the window as the Veterans switch to "Anchors aweigh, my boys, anchors aweigh..."

48. EXT. MANHATTAN SKYLINE DAY

A stunning view through the bus window past Joe's reflection.

JOE'S REFLECTION
Gonna swing my lasso and rope that whole goddam island, yeah!

49. EXT. BROADWAY PARADE DAY

Drum majorettes leading the parade -- ticker tape and confetti -- girls at skyscraper windows.

50. INTERCUT NEWSREEL CLIP

Charles Lindberg (or James Stewart) waving at the crowd.

51. EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR DAY

Girls lining the piers -- flags, banners, bunting -- ship horns, whistles, bells.

52. INT. BUS DAY

Joe crowded as the Veterans prepare to leave the bus, lifting down banners and flags.

53. EXT. LINCOLN TUNNEL DAY

The bus suddenly surrounded by converging traffic, horns honking, segueing into the noises of Times Square.

54. EXT. MARQUEE DAY

Flag draped, reading: WELCOME VETERANS!

55. EXT. STREET -- BANNER DAY

Flapping in the wind -- WELCOME VETERANS!

56. EXT. TIMES SQUARE PALACE HOTEL DAY

The marquee announces TRANSIENTS WELCOME. O.S. a singing radio station break blares "W-I-N-S NEW YORK..."

57. EXT. RADIO TOWER DAY

The sign flashes WINS "...ten-ten on your dial!" A torchy woman's voice sings from a lonely echo chamber -- introducing a love theme which will haunt Joe throughout the film.

INT. ROOM 1014 DAY

Joe sets his radio on the dresser, his suitcase on the bed, then turns to examine his new home -- as anonymous as his Texas hotel room -- but boasting a coin-operated television set. Fascinated, Joe inserts a quarter...

...the love song continues over a television talk show featuring a POODLE WIGMAKER defending his profession against a Joe Pyne-type PANEL HOST, "...well, I perform a real service, there's a need, so many people, you know, really live in their pets, I mean, lonely, I grant you, but their feeling is real. They want to lavish as much love, give them as much, yes, pamper them like they were really human children or whatever..."

SALLY BUCK'S VOICE
There's a TV dinner in the fridge, lover boy...

49. INT. REMEMBERED PARLOR ANOTHER TIME

Little Joe stares sullenly at an antique TV box while Sally Buck puts her hat on at the fireplace mirror. There is a framed picture of Woodsy Niles on the mantle.

SALLY BUCK
You be okay, won't you? Maybe I bring you a treat if you're a good boy...

50. INT. ROOM 1014 DAY

Joe watches the Panel Host, "...you're a nut case, fella, a real nut case..."

51. INT. REMEMBERED BEAUTY SALON ANOTHER TIME

Little Joe massaging Sally Buck's neck -- continuing the earlier scene.

CONTINUED

SALLY BUCK
I'm so beat, no point you waiting round, toots, think I'll stop in for a beer or two...

62. INT. ROOM 1014 DAY

Joe sits on the edge of the bed, watching the poodles primp.

63. INT. REMEMBERED PARLOR ANOTHER TIME

Little Joe stares unblinking at the TV screen as Sally Buck kisses him on the forehead, dressed for the street.

SALLY BUCK
Expect me when you see me. Looks like I got me a new beau, lover boy, how's that for an old grammaw? I'll leave you movie money...

Sally Buck tucks a dollar bill under a framed picture of Jesus, who has replaced Woodsy Niles on the mantle.

64. INT. ROOM 1014 DAY

As a fairy godmother's magic wand removes sticky hair spray from a pretty model's head, Joe's quarter runs out and the screen goes blank. At the same moment, the love song is cut off by a singing station break "W-I-N-S NEW YORK!" Joe rises, flipping the dial of the radio to a cultured woman's voice reading "...the Dow Jones averages, brought you by Morgan Vandercook. Up your income with sound investment counseling..."

JOE
Up yours, lady.

...but Joe leaves the lady on, savoring the expensive sound of her voice reading the stock quotations. Joe seats himself at the desk, pleased to find a postcard photograph of the hotel. He picks up a ballpoint pen, counts ten floors up from the street and marks a huge X -- THIS IS ME, then turns the card over, pen poised over the address blank.

INT. CAFETERIA SCULLERY DAY

Ralph stares at the card, surrounded by dirty dishes.

RALPH
Hell, he know I can't read...

66. INT. ROOM 1014 DAY

Joe's pen wavers, starts to write and stops.

67. EXT. SALLY BUCK'S BEAUTY PARLOR DAY

As we saw it last, deserted, a FOR RENT sign in the window. Joe's reflection appears, staring at himself, dressed in his dishwasher's clothes.

JOE'S VOICE
After all them dishes are washed, what?

JOE'S REFLECTION
Then they bring some more dishes and I wash them and then I, uh, sleep some and then wash some more dishes and then I...

JOE'S VOICE
Say it, lover boy!

JOE'S REFLECTION
Die.

68. INT. ROOM 1014 DAY

Joe stares at the postcard, bemused.

JOE'S VOICE
Well, you better just shake your tail, lover boy, and root, hog or die.

68. CONTINUED

Joe rises abruptly, rips up the postcard and tosses it out the window.

JOE
Goddam if I came to this town to write postcards.

69. EXT. TIMES SQUARE DAY

The torn fragments flutter down on the crowd -- a woman brushing irritably at her hair -- a man grimacing, glancing up -- a cop removing his hat to examine it.

70. EXT. TIMES SQUARE PALACE HOTEL DAY

From a low angle -- identical with the postcard photograph -- an unseen hand scrawls a huge X -- THIS IS ME. Camera zooms up to a closeup of Joe at the window.

71. EXT. FIFTH AVENUE DAY

From on high -- as though Joe were watching himself -- the Stetson moves through a crowd of Fifth Avenue shoppers...

72. EXT. GLASS BUILDING DAY

...passing a glass bank, lady tellers counting money...

73. EXT. CAR SHOWROOM DAY

...passing a display of imported luxury cars...

74. EXT. JEWELRY STORE DAY

...passing a window which features a single gem -- pausing as horns blast O.S. and a mod blonde in a stalled sports car motions to Joe -- she needs a push. Joe grins, glances at

CONTINUED

himself in the window, runs a comb through his hair, then turns back to see a cop helping the mod blonde.

75. EXT. PARK AVENUE DAY

Joe's heels drag as he walks a deserted block of luxury apartment houses. O.S. the torchy woman's voice sings Joe's love theme in counterpoint to the blasting horns, a siren, a fire bell, a screech of brakes. Joe's spirits rise as he hears the tic-tac-tic of high heels overtaking the heavy click-clack-click of his boots. He adjusts his pace to arrive at the corner at the smae time as a smart and -- in Joe's eyes -- very RICH LADY. Joe grins boyishly, holding his Stetson over his heart.

JOE
Beg pardon, ma'am, I'm new here in town, just in from Houston-Texas, and looking for the Statue of Liberty.

The delicate profile gives no sign of hearing. Joe follows her to the parkway in the middle of the avenue. There she stops and turns, neither friendly nor hostile.

RICH LADY
Were you joking? About the Statue of Liberty?

JOE
Joking? No, ma'am. Oh no! I mean business!

RICH LADY
I'm sorry. I thought you were -- never mind -- I've never actually been there, but let me see, you take the Seventh Avenue subway, I think, to the end of the line...

JOE
You sure are a pretty lady

5 CONTINUED

The Rich Lady tries to frown, taken aback, blushing.

RICH LADY
You're not looking for the Statue of Liberty at all.

JOE
No, ma'am, I'm not.

RICH LADY
Why, that's perfectly dreadful. Aren't you ashamed of yourself?

A twinkle of amusement and sympathy reveals the age lines at the corner of her eyes. Then she continues on quickly, just as the light turns. Joe's view is blocked for a moment by traffic, then he sees...

...the Rich Lady, newly aware of her flanks as she climbs the steps of a brownstone and searches for her key. Still from Joe's viewpoint, he sees himself move into frame and follow the Rich Lady up the steps. The love theme swells O.S. as the Rich Lady leads him into the house and closes the door...

...leaving Joe standing alone on the parkway island, surrounded by towering wealth. The love theme continues over...

6 EXT. LEXINGTON AVENUE DAY

...a pair of high-heeled pink slippers, walking a miniature poodle -- slowing slightly, reacting to Joe's cowboy boots as they pass, pause and turn back.

CASS'S VOICE
Hurry up, Baby. Do um goody-goods for Mama.

Joe grins, holding his hat over his heart as he approaches CASS TREHUNE, a blonde lady in a tight black dress, with the look of a movie star who wrecked her career with food.

16. CONTINUED

JOE
Beg pardon, ma'am. I'm brand spanking new to this town, come from Houston-Texas and hoping to get a look at the Statue of Liberty...

CASS
You're hoping to get a look at what?

JOE
The Statue of Liberty.

CASS
It's up in Central Park, taking a leak. If you hurry, you'll make the supper show. Now get lost.

But as she turns, Cass winks, dimpling the corners of her mouth, signaling Joe to follow her.

77. INT. APARTMENT HOUSE ELEVATOR DAY

Cass holds the DOOR OPEN button till Joe enters the elevator, then the doors close with a soft expensive little kllooosh and Cass turns with the smile of a very tiny girl...

CASS
Hi.

...her lips closing on Joe's as the poodle yaps shrilly at their feet. Superimposed, almost subliminally, a golden dollar sign appears, halating like a star, and the bell of a pinball machine rings O.S.

78. INT. CASS'S APARTMENT DAY

A princess telephone is ringing on a gold and white desk. Cass runs to grab it...

CASS
Hello?

CONTINUED

...as Joe steps from the elevator, which opens directly onto Cass's penthouse. Cass beckons him toward her, hooks a finger into his neckerchief and pulls his mouth toward hers while she talks on the phone.

CASS
Morey? Hi-ee, honey...

Cass gurgles happily as her free hand unbuckles Joe's garrison belt.

CASS
I'm just out of breath, honey, running to catch the phone.

As her fingers reach for Joe's zipper, cut to...

...Joe's hand unzipping her dress.

CASS
I was walking Baby. Him got to do him goody-goods, right?

The poodle tugs at Joe's slacks until they fall. Cass steers her ear to Joe's mouth, shuddering deliciously.

CASS
Oh God, oh stop, I can't stand that. I just die...
(quickly into phone)
It's Baby, Morey. Him trying to say hello. Say hello to Morey, Baby.

Cass holds the phone toward the yapping poodle, twisting herself against Joe as she wriggles out of her dress, passing the phone from one hand to the other.

CASS
Okay, old goosie? Now lookie, when do you want me to meet you? Whatever you say. I'll take a nap, watch TV, you know, kill time. Okay, but just one, a big wet one.

78. CONTINUED

Cass hangs up. The poodle yaps hysterically, disentangling himself from her tumbling dress -- hops onto the couch -- glances off and flees again as an overturned lamp crashes O.S.

79. INT. CASS'S BEDROOM DAY

The poodle bounces onto the bed -- remaining long enough to establish a TV REMOTE CONTROL TUNER lying on the satin coverlet -- then leaps down in panic as he hears Joe and Cass explode into the bedroom, laughing lustily...

...the remote control tuner buried suddenly under the full flesh of Cass's hip, activating...

...a twenty-five-inch television screen, blasting at full volume...

...Cass's eyes widening, profoundly impressed...

CASS
Ye gods...

...the images and sound of the television set flicking joyfully from channel to channel...

...Joe laughing, engulfed by Cass's abundance...

...Cass wild-eyed, overflowing the frame...

...a gleaming slot machine -- three Sahara cowgirls clicking into line for jackpot -- silver dollars overflowing the frame...

80. EXT. MANHATTAN SKYLINE DAY

...the Mutual of New York tower flashes MONY!

JOE'S VOICE
Holy shee-it, this is a goddam penthouse you got here, Cass, a real goddam penthouse.

INT. CASS'S BEDROOM DAY

Joe turns away from a small terrace, buckling his belt, glancing off toward the sound of Cass in the shower. He flicks the TV remote control, enjoying his power, ignoring the silent images on the screen -- battle casualties, a pretty girl recommending aspirin, a man's stomach flashing animated pain, starving war refugees, a dog eating pzazz -- flicking it off to concentrate on the costume jewelry and perfume bottles on Cass's dressing table.

CASS'S VOICE
Don't look, baby...

Joe turns to look as Cass comes from the bathroom, holding a towel around her as she runs behind the closet door.

JOE
Say, Cass, I, uh, sure have enjoyed being here. Believe it's as fine a time as I've had in my life!

CASS'S VOICE
Me, too, lover.

JOE
That's good, it is, cause, well I guess I didn't tell you why I came to New York, did I?

A tower of black bugle beads emerges from the closet door.

CASS
Zip this thing, will you, Tex?

Joe zips her dress, follows her to the dressing table, where she sprays her hair with lacquer.

JOE
Truth is, Cass, I'm, well, I'm in business.

CASS
Oh, poor you. Morey's got terrible ulcers.

1. CONTINUED

Cass stretches her upper lip across her teeth and she smears it with orange lipstick.

JOE
Don't know what line Morey's in, but myself now, fact is -- I'm a hustler.

CASS
(lips stretched)
Hers'n zodda meg a livig.

JOE
Beg pardon, ma'am?

CASS
Said, a person's gotta make a living.

JOE
You sure you heard what I said?

CASS
Scuse me, hon, fraid I'm only half here. Maybe you oughta run on along. But why don't you take this phone number?

Joe grins, relieved as she takes out a gold lame purse and opens it. He frowns as she folds it upside down, empty.

CASS
Darn! I didn't get to the bank -- Tex -- could you let me have a little coin for the taxi-waxi?

Joe stands mute as she cups his chin in her hand, seductively.

CASS
You're such a doll. I hate money, don't you? God, it's been fun.

81. CONTINUED

JOE
Funny thing, you mentioning money. I was just about to ask your for some...

Joe tries to laugh but it sticks in his throat as Cass speaks -- an impassioned whisper -- still holding Joe's chin.

CASS
You bastard! You son of a bitch! You think you're dealing with some old slut? Look at me! You think just cause you're a longhorn bull you can get away with this crap? Well, you're out of your mind. I am a gorgeous chick, thirty-one, that's right, you said it!

Sobbing suddenly, she throws herself on the bed. Joe stands bewildered by the vastness of her grief.

JOE
Hey. Hey, Cass. Did you think I meant that? Christ, would I be asking you for money with a wad like that riding on my hip?

Joe waves his wallet at her, but she only cries louder. He hands her a kleenex. She clutches it to her face, wailing. Joe leans over the bed, whispering in her ear:

JOE
Hey. You are a gorgeous-looking piece, Cass. Guy gets horny, just looking at you. It's a fact. How much you need for that taxi? Ten? Twenty? There you go.

31. CONTINUED

Joe tucks a twenty-dollar bill into her bosom, tilts his Stetson and starts out. Cass blows her nose, looking after him. O.S. chorus sings, "From this valley they say you are going -- we will miss your bright eyes and sweet smile...

82. LEXINGTON AVENUE DAY

From a high angle, Joe walks away from the apartment house, chorus continuing O.S. "...they say you are taking the sunshine that brightened our pathway a while."

83. INT. EVERETT'S BAR DAY

Joe sits at the bar, staring morosely at his image in the mirror, already quite drunk, oblivious to the assorted types hiding from daylight in the barn-like saloon, waiting for night to fall.

RATSO'S VOICE
Excuse me, I'm just admiring that colossal shirt...

RATSO studies Joe across the corner of the bar -- a sickly, child-size old man of twenty-one -- hopefully nursing an empty beer glass, contemplating the money on the bar in front of Joe.

RATSO
That is one hell of a shirt. I bet you paid a pretty price for it, am I right?

JOE
Oh, it ain't cheap. I mean, yeah, I'd say this was an all right shirt. Don't like to, uh, you know, have a lot of cheap stuff on my back.

CONTINUED

Ratso spits as JACKIE leans on the bar next to Joe -- a feminine young person, heavily made-up, hair teased, wearing earrings and a lace-trimmed blouse over shocking pink levis.

JACKIE
Got a cigarette, cowboy?

RATSO
(a stage whisper)
More goddam faggots in this town.

Reaching for a cigarette, Joe glances at Jackie, startled as Jackie twitches his pink levis angrily and turns away.

JOE
Shee-it...
(shakes his head)
Kee-rist, you really know the ropes. Wish to hell I bumped into you before. I'm Joe Buck from Texas and I'm gonna buy you a drink, what do you say to that?

RATSO
Enrico Rizzo from the Bronx. Don't mind if I do.

JOE
(slaps bar)
Same all around! For my friend, too!

The TV screen over the bar features a mating game program as Jackie cruises down to join a tall farm boy with plucked eyebrows. The TV HOST points to three young men, visible only from the shoulders up, from whom a pretty DATE GIRL in blindfold must choose an escort.

8. CONTINUED

TV HOST
...and for the losers, who don't get the girl, we'll give as consolation prices -- a six month supply of underarm deodorant...

In a booth now -- the TV screen in the background, continuing the game -- Joe is refilling Ratso's beer glass as he speaks, loud over the laughter of the TV audience.

JOE
...you see what I'm getting at here? She got a penthouse up there with color TV and more goddam diamonds than an archbishop and she busts out bawling when I ask for money!

RATSO
For what?

JOE
For money.

RATSO
For money for what?

JOE
I'm a hustler, hell, didn't you know that?

RATSO
How would I know? You gotta tell a person these things
(shakes his head)
A hustler? Picking up trade on the street like that -- baby, believe me -- you need management.

JOE
I think you just put your finger on it, I do.

83 CONTINUED

RATSO
My friend O'Daniel. That's who you need. Operates the biggest stable in town. In the whole goddam metropolitan area. A stud like you -- paying! -- not that I blame you -- a dame starts crying, I cut my heart for her...

JACKIE'S VOICE
I'd call that a very minor operation...

Ratso grabs the neck of a bottle, sliding back in the booth. Joe scowls as Jackie appears with the tall farm boy.

JACKIE
...in fact, you just sit comfy and I'll cut it out with my fingernail file. You won't even need Blue Cross, Ratso.

RATSO
The name is Rizzo.

JACKIE
That's what I said, Ratso.

JOE
(suddenly)
Hey now, you heard him.

On the TV screen -- the Date Girl announces:

TV DATE GIRL
I pick Number Two! He's cool!

RATSO
That's okay, Joe. I'm used to these types that like to pick on cripples. Sewers're full of 'em.

33. CONTINUED

JACKIE
May I ask one thing, cowboy? If you sit there and he sits way over there, how's he gonna get his hand into your pocket? But I'm sure he has that all figured out...
(to Ratso)
Good night, sweets.

TV HOST
May present your chosen mate!

The TV host pulls aside the screen which has concealed the lower half of the three young men. Number Two, her chosen mate, is a dwarf sitting on a high stool. The girl's spontaneous dismay starts everyone laughing hysterically, including the dwarf.

34. EXT. SIXTH AVENUE DAY

Joe has difficulty keeping up with Ratso, who swings himself along with surprising agility, his half skipping little gate favoring one game leg.

RATSO
Look, with these chicks that want to buy it, most of 'em are older, dignified, right? Social register types. They can't be trotting down to Times Square to pick out the merchandise. They need a middleman, right? That's O'Daniel.

Joe hesitates as Ratso darts into traffic against a red light, yelling unheard obscenities at a cab driver who blasts his horn. Joe runs recklessly forward as Ratso slams the taxi fender with his fist, pretending to be hit, falling into Joe's arms. The taxi stops, halting traffic. Ratso recovers, strolls casually in front of the cab, biting his thumb at the driver.

84. CONTINUED

RATSO
It's a crime, a stud like you passing out double sawbucks to a chick like that. With proper management you should be taking home fifty, a hundred bucks a day. More if you wanta moonlight...

85. EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE COCKTAIL HOUR

At the corner of Central Park South, Ratso points toward a young man with diamond cuff-links; sitting with a blue-haired matron who puffs on a small cigar. Ratso waves jauntily at the young man, raising his thumb and forefinger in a circle, leaving the young man baffled as Ratso hurries Joe on.

RATSO
Him I placed with O'Daniel just two weeks ago. And look. Not much of a stud either, what I hear...

86. EXT. CENTRAL PARK SOUTH COCKTAIL HOUR

Ratso automatically checks the coin return boxes of the phone booths they pass. Walking the park side of the street, looking across at the limousines and taxis waiting outside luxury hotels and apartment buildings.

JOE
Hey, listen, how about you take me to mee this Mister O'Diddle bird right now?

RATSO
Well, Joe, you're a nice guy, and I'd be doing you both a favor, but why? What'm I dragging my bum leg all over town for? It's no picnic and what for, for me myself, what?

86. CONTINUED

Ratso stops opposite the Plaza Hotel, pointing across at an aristocratic blonde stepping out of a Rolls Royce.

RATSO
Tomorrow when some piece like that's scratching your back in a Fifth Avenue townhouse, where'll your pal Rizzo be? Nedicks.

JOE
Hold it, just hold it. You think I'm that kinda sombitch? Just name your cut, whatever you want, you got it right now. Five? Ten, how's that?

Joe peels a ten from his wallet and offers it to Ratso.

RATSO
Joe, please. You know what I'd ask anyone else? Oh hell, tell you what I'll do, I'll take the ten...
(he does)
...but when I hand you over to Mr. O'Daniel, I'll have to have another ten, Joe, just to like cover expenses...

87. INT. PUBLIC PHONE BOOTH DUSK

Ratso is on the phone. Joe holds the door open, listening.

RATSO
This boy is just your meat, Mr. O'Daniel, believe it, I'm telling you -- what? -- Enrico Rizzo from the Bronx. The point is he needs you. Right now. Tonight...
(aside to Joe)
I got his tongue hanging out...

89. CONTINUED

RATSO
Sherry-Netherlands Hotel. Now get your ass in there. He's waiting!

90. INT. WEST SIDE HOTEL CORRIDOR DUSK

Ratso starts the elevator down, leaving Joe alone, repeating to himself "Cherry Neverlin" as he looks for 901.

91. EXT. WEST SIDE HOTEL DUSK

Ratso bursts from the hotel, almost running as he disappears.

92. INT. WEST SIDE HOTEL CORRIDOR DUSK

Joe finds 901 at a dark end of the corridor, knocks confidently, hearing a few bars of his love theme as he stuffs a fresh stick of gum in his mouth. Then the door is thrown open by O'DANIEL -- for an instant appearing to wear a diamond-studded skull-cap, the naked overhead light bulb bright after the dark corridor, halating in Joe's eyes like the earlier dollar sign.

O'DANIEL
You must be Joe Buck. Come in.

93. INT. WEST SIDE HOTEL ROOM DUSK

O'Daniel, fat in a worn-out bathrobe, examines Joe like a prodigal son as he leads him into the room -- as anonymous as Joe's own room.

O'DANIEL
Am I tickled to find you, boy! Come on in and let's get a look at you. Turn around. Good strong back. You'll need it. So you want help -- take a seat, relax, tell me about yourself. Cowboy, huh?

93. CONTINUED

JOE
No sir, I'm no cowboy really, but I'm a first class stud.

O'DANIEL
Take it easy, boy...
(laughs)
Seems to me you're different than a lotta boys that come to me. Most of 'em seem troubled, confused, but I'd say you knew exactly what you want.

JOE
You bet I do, sir.

O'DANIEL
But I'll bet you got one thing in common with them other boys. I'll bet you're lonesome.

JOE
Well, not too, I mean, a little.

O'Daniel rises suddenly in a fury of self-righteousness, pacing, his voice simpering, whining sarcastically.

O'DANIEL
I'm lonesome. I'm lonesome so I'm a drunk. I'm lonesome so I'm a dope fiend. I'm lonesome so I'm a thief, a fornicator, a whore-monger. Poop, I say, poop! I've heard it all and I'm sick of it, sick to death.

JOE
Yessir, I can see that.

O'DANIEL
Lonesomeness is something you take. You hear? Dammit, you take it and go about your business, that's all.

CONTINUED

JOE
Well, uh, I'm raring to go.

O'DANIEL
Yes, I believe you are. Cowboy, huh?

JOE
Uh, yessir.

O'DANIEL
Ready for hard work, son?

JOE
Ready for anything.

O'DANIEL
I got a hunch, Joe Buck, it's gonna be easier for you than most.

JOE
Gonna be like money from home.

O'DANIEL
Money from home, see, there's your strength, you put things in earthy terms any man can understand, son. I warn you I'm gonna use you, I'm gonna run you ragged!

Joe laughs, driving an obscene uppercut into the air. O'Daniel laughs with him.

O'DANIEL
You're a wonderful boy. You'n me gonna have fun, dammit, it don't have to be joyless. Say, why don't we get right down on our knees now?

CONTINUED

JOE
Get down -- where?

O'DANIEL
Right here, why not? I prayed in saloons, I prayed in the street, I prayed on the toilet. He don't care where, what He wants is that prayer!

O'Daniel drops on all fours, crawling to find the plug of an electric cord. He shoves it into a wall socket, switches off the overhead light and suddenly a hollow, tinted plastic Jesus glows on the dresser. O.S. a revivalist congregation sings. And now we notice, with Joe, placards and flags, horns and tracts, all the paraphernalia of a street corner evangelist.

JOE
Shee-it...

O'DANIEL
That's the ticket, just open your heart and let it flow. It ain't the words, it's the love beyond 'em!

94. EXT. REMEMBERED BAPTISM ANOTHER TIME

Sally Buck sings with the congregation while a rawboned preacher stands in the river, preparing to immerse little Joe.

O'DANIEL'S VOICE
Don't fight it, boy!

95. INT. WEST SIDE HOTEL ROOM DUSK

O'Daniel tries to pull Joe down beside him.

O'DANIEL
Pray and you shall be heard!

EXT. REMEMBERED BAPTISM ANOTHER TIME

Camera becomes little Joe, glimpsing the fevered faces of Sally Buck and the congregation singing on the riverbank, just before being plunged under the river. O'Daniel's voice reechoes, filtered through water.

O'DANIEL
Don't be frightened, son!

97. EXT. TIMES SQUARE NIGHT

Joe runs in aimless panic, pushing through the crowd, pursued by O'Daniel's voice and the singing congregation.

O'DANIEL
Don't run from Jesus!

Joe stops short as he sees the front page of a tabloid on a newsstand. There is a picture of Joe being led away by two deputies, under a headline ALABAMA MURDERER SHOTGUNS ELEVEN.

98. EXT. FORTY-SECOND STREET NIGHT

Joe searches the faces of the crowd, running forward suddenly as he sees Jackie and the farmboy picked up by two men in a large convertible. Joe chases the car to Eighth Avenue but stops, frightened as he sees himself in multiple image on the front of every newspaper displayed on a newsstand.

99. INT. EVERETT'S BAR NIGHT

The saloon is almost empty during the after dinner lull. The BARTENDER doesn't look up from his newspaper as Joe approaches.

JOE
Say, you know that runty little bastard I was with?

BARTENDER
I don't know nothing.

99. CONTINUED

Joe tenses as he sees the tabloid picture of himself on the back of the bartender's paper. Joe's hand closes around an empty beer bottle, a terrible violence surging very near the surface. O.S. women scream.

100. INT. REMEMBERED BEAUTY SALON ANOTHER TIME

Reflected in the mirror, we see little Joe wildly smashing bottles and glass display cabinets -- the voices of women screaming O.S. -- little Joe hurling a perfume bottle which shatters the mirror and his own image.

101. INT. EVERETT'S BAR NIGHT

The empty beer bottle stands where it was. Joe has disappeared. On the TV screen over the bar, sound drowned out by the juke box, we see a blowup of the tabloid photograph, revealing a young man very similar to, but clearly not Joe.

102. EXT. TIMES SQUARE NIGHT

Colorful lights still flash seductive promise. The vertical lights on the MONY tower reach bottom and freeze momentarily.

103. STILL PHOTOGRAPH

Joe at his hotel window staring out blankly. Gun fire O.S....

104. INT. SHOOTING GALLERY DAY

The radio at Joe's ear is drowned out by a kid in cowboy hat, shooting alone in the gallery. Two policemen idly slap their thighs with night sticks. Joe moves on, unconsciously checking the coin return box of a pay phone.

105. STILL PHOTOGRAPH

Joe curled up on his bed like a baby, fully dressed, his radio on the night stand. O.S. his love theme, remote, hollow...

106. EXT. FORTY-SECOND STREET NIGHT

Joe's radio is at his ear "...never too late to look great, Ben's Bargain Basement's open 'till five a.m., miles and miles of Western styles, worth more at any store, money talks and nobody walks." For the first time, Joe is aware of the other midnight cowboys lurking in doorways, the cruising queens, the middle-age men in sport shirts. Joe moves on self-consciously as he sees a scar-faced policeman, unconsciously massaging his night stick. Camera holds on a window display of gag buttons, featuring NEW YORK WILL BREAK YOUR HEART, BABY.

107. STILL PHOTOGRAPH

Joe soaking in the tub, eyes closed.

108. EXT. TIMES SQUARE DANCE HALL DAY

Joe's radio promises job opportunities for young men eighteen to twenty-five in the U.S. Air Force. He stands with a crowd staring up at a girl go-go dancing in the window of SERGEANT PEPPER'S LONELY HEART CLUB.

109. STILL PHOTOGRAPH

Joe staring in the mirror. O.S. static over his love theme.

110. EXT. SIXTH AVENUE NIGHT

By work-light, the tarrier in metal helmet leans on a jack hammer, beyond the sign DIG WE MUST, drowning out Joe's radio.

111. STILL PHOTOGRAPH

Joe flexing his muscles in his jockey shorts while -- LIVE ON TV SCREEN -- a physical culture personality finishes push-ups and starts pitching his own extra protein bread.

112. EXT. TIMES SQUARE PANCAKE HOUSE DAY

Joe's radio continues the super-break commercial while a fry cook flips flapjacks in the window. But Joe's eyes are on a sign DISHWASHER WANTED. Joe looks up and his eyes meet those of the young man scraping garbage behind the counter. It's Joe.

JOE
Shee-it.

113. STILL PHOTOGRAPH

Joe sits in the hotel lobby, staring out at the street, unable to concentrate on his comic book. On two-way radio, a woman's voice giggles as she speaks, "When I can't sleep, well, I just dial the time and listen to those old seconds clicking by like, you know, counting sheep?"

114. SIDEWALK CAFE COCKTAIL HOUR

Joe watches a young man hold a taxi door for an older lady, at the same corner where Ratso waved to another young man. The woman's predatory eyes linger momentarily on Joe before she leads the young man into the Cafe. The two-way radio continues over, "...that's what I do about insomnia."

JOE
Well, now, ma'am, next time you got that feeling coming on, you dial Joe Buck. I'll show you what to do...

115. STILL PHOTOGRAPH

Joe straddles a chair, staring at a blank TV screen.

SINGING COMMERCIAL
Need a little easy money? It's E-Z
Want a little easy cash? It's E-Z

116. E-Z LOAN COMMERCIAL

As the jingle continues, we follow Joe and his radio into the loan office, the depressing reality photographed and edited in the style of a TV commercial:

JINGLE	
Easy locations to get to	Joe arrives confident
Easy ladies to greet you	Harassed E-Z receptionist
Easy chairs to seat you	Lines of uneasy customers
Easy payments to meet	Desperate, angry faces
Let E-Z set you	Reams of E-Z forms to fill
On Easy Street	Clerk's sneer, says
	Joe has to be kidding

117. INT. TIMES SQUARE PALACE LOBBY NIGHT

Joe's image frozen -- as if another still photograph -- standing at the desk, waiting for his key.

JOE'S VOICE
Key to 1014...

Action continues as the DESK CLERK hands Joe a folded paper instead of a key. Joe opens it, deeply perplexed.

DESK CLERK
Looks like you been locked out of your room, buddy. Till you pick up your tab.

JOE
Uh, what about my things'n all?

DESK CLERK
We keep them nice and safe till you get this straightened out.

118. INTERCUT

Room 1014 warm and inviting, Joe's suitcase on the bed.

JOE
Listen, tell you what, you can keep all the rest of the goddam junk if you let me have just the suitcase. That suitcase means a lot to me.

119. INTERCUT

The postcard photograph marked X -- THIS IS ME.

DESK CLERK

We keep everything. House rules.

120. TIMES SQUARE NIGHT

Joe stands outside the hotel, stunned, seeing the bright-colored lights turn suddenly grey. The film continues in black and white as Joe walks into the crowd.

121. EXT. SALLY BUCK'S BEAUTY SALON DAY

The FOR RENT sign flapping in the wind.

122. EVERETT'S BAR DAY

Joe nurses a short beer, like the regulars. He looks up as a crippled panhandler approaches, vaguely reminiscent of Ratso.

JOE

Screw off.

123. INT. ROOM 1014 NIGHT

The bed turned back, clean sheets, a soft night light.

124. INT. BUS DEPOT NIGHT

Joe is stretched on a bench, his Stetson over his eyes. A loud speaker announces a bus "departing for Texas" but Joe does not move. A policeman taps Joe's boots with his night stick. Joe rises and starts away with mixed anger and apprehension.

125. INT. PUBLIC MEN'S ROOM DAY

Two matching Ivy Leaguers exchange a glance as they see Joe washing his feet in the basin. Joe stares back with a belligerent grin.

JOE
Any objection, gentlemen?

126. ALL NIGHT CAFETERIA NIGHT

Joe balances a cup of coffee, walking past the other solitary night people, avoiding each other's eyes. Joe spots what he's looking for and seats himself next to a gaunt woman and her ten year old son, both freaked out, erratically touching things, themselves, each other in a futile effort to make contact with reality. But Joe is only concerned with the plastic-wrapped crackers left by their empty soup bowls.

JOE
Y'ain't gonna eat them?

The woman stares at Joe blankly. The boy runs a toy mouse across the table, up his mother's arm and around her face. With a polite nod, Joe opens the crackers and squirts one with ketchup. Joe upsets his chair as a great gob of ketchup spills onto his pants...

JOE
Shee-it.

...glancing around with an embarrassed laugh, but the only one looking is a cop, scratching his calf with a night stick. Joe keeps his back to the customers as he moves to the water dispenser, wets a paper napkin and tries to wipe away the stain. But the water has only spread the stain across his pants and down his leg. He blushes as a blonde young street-walker giggles.

SALLY BUCK'S VOICE
Wet your britches, lover boy?

127. INT. SUBWAY ARCADE NIGHT

Joe tries to hide the stain with his jacket as he checks the coin boxes of vending machines, wary as he passes a burly policeman, abstractedly snapping his handcuffs in front of a bakery window display of bride-and-groom wedding cakes. Joe barely glances at a confused MIDDLE-AGE LADY.

MIDDLE-AGE LADY
How do I get to Grand Central?

JOE
Shuttle. Follow the green light.

Automatically checking the trough of a gum vending machine, Joe unexpectedly faces himself in the mirror, the eyes unstaring at him tired and hopeless. His hand reaches unconsciously for a cigarette. The package is empty. He crumples it in his fist but holds it.

JOE
Allright, cowboy, Enough of this shee-it. You know what you got to do?
(nods)
Then go do it.

128. FORTY-SECOND STREET NIGHT

Joe hurls the crumpled package into a DON'T BE A LITTERBUG basket as he emerges from the subway, his radio at his ear. The torchy voice belts his love song, merging with street noises crying danger -- an ambulance, a burglar alarm, a policeman's whistle -- the lights flashing lurid color for the first time since Joe was locked out, no longer promising but threatening, clashing, warning as...

...from a high angle, across the street, Joe joins the other midnight cowboys, offering himself to all comers. His figure is momentarily obliterated by traffic then...

128. CONTINUED

...zooming in, we see Joe self-consciously trying to hide the stain on his pants, embarrassed as a large sedan slows then moves on to stop in front of a motorcycle freak. Joe is briefly obliterated again by a passing police car...

...the receding flash of its turret light revealing Joe in close conversation with a frightened young FAT BOY, whose eyes plead for reassurance as Joe scowls.

129. INT. ROOM 1014 DAY

Joe's black and white suitcase gleams on the bed.

JOE'S VOICE
Twenty-three bucks, I got to have twenty-three bucks...

130. INT. ALL NIGHT MOVIE NIGHT

From an apparently empty balcony -- an old science fiction film grinds endlessly through the night -- a lost spaceman trying to make contact with a tantalizing Martian maiden across an invisible time barrier, theremin voices calling, "Earthling, where are you?"

FAT BOY'S VOICE
Okay. Sure. I got twenty-five...

At the top of the balcony, Joe leans back, turning his face away as the Fat Boy embraces him, kissing Joe's cheek and neck, his head moving down out of frame to show -- on the screen -- the spaceman and Martian maiden meeting, arms outstretched. But the Martian maiden moves right on through the spaceman, crying, "Earthling come back, however many centuries it is, I'll wait!" Joe closes his eyes, forcing his memory back...

INT. REMEMBERED MOVIE HOUSE ANOTHER TIME

...repeating the remembered image of Anastasia and a younger Joe, behind the movie screen...

ANASTASIA
You're the only one, Joe, the only, only one ever!

...the remembered passion continuing, mounting -- intercut with flash impressions, like flipping pages of a nudie magazine -- naked, half-draped blondes gazing into camera with sultry eyes, including one comic strip sexpot and the calendar girl in Joe's Texas hotel room...

ANASTASIA'S VOICE
You're the best, the very best, yes, yes, kiss me, oh God please kiss me, Joe, now, now, now!

...Joe's face in extreme closeup, sounds of both movie houses merging, confused. dominated by the voices of adolescent boys...

BOYS' VOICES
Hey, Joe, give someone else a chance! What's he doing for chrisake? He kissing Anastasia? You better swallow a whole goddam drugstore, man!

...an adolescent ratpack waiting in line behind the screen, laughing in coarse whispers, watching Joe and Anastasia. O.S. theremin voices call "Earthling, where are you?"

132. INT. ALL NIGHT MOVIE NIGHT

On screen, the Martian maiden moves through the spaceman, crying, "Earthling, come back, however many centuries it is, I'll wait!"

33. INT. ALL NIGHT MOVIE RESTROOM NIGHT

Joe watches the Fat Boy doubled over, retching.

JOE
I'm awful damn sorry you're sick, kid, but you gonna have to gimme that money like you said.

FAT BOY
I was lying. I don't have it. What're you going to do to me?

JOE
(controls fury)
What you got in your pockets?

Eagerly, the boy produces a family photograph, a subway token, a dirty handkerchief. Joe grabs his wrist, revealing a watch.

JOE
How much's that worth?

FAT BOY
I can't go home without my watch! My mother'd die! She'd die! Take my books! Not my watch! She'd die!

But Joe has already kicked open the door. Theremin voices drown out the Fat Boy, calling "Earthling, where are you?"

134. INT. ALL NIGHT MOVIE NIGHT

Joe sprawls, trying to sleep, his feet on the balcony rail, the radio at his ear. On screen, once again, the Martian maiden moves through the spaceman, crying, but we hear the voice of a desperate woman on two-way radio. As she speaks, a policeman moves along the aisle, slapping his palm with his night stick.

34. CONTINUED

DESPERATE VOICE
Bill, can I call you Bill; Mister Bonner? I feel like I know you from listening. What I called about, Bill, I'm gonna kill myself...

135. EXT. SIXTH AVENUE DAY

From a high angle, only Joe's Stetson and radio can be seen above a passing bus, its side panel advertising BILL BONNER'S STRAIGHT LINE, A STRAIGHT TALK SHOW.

BONNER'S VOICE
Why call me, baby? If you want to do it; just do it, don't talk about it. Are we drunky? Feeling a little sorry for curselves maybe?

Joe appears in full figure as the bus passes. He stands looking at the suitcases in a luggage shop window.

DESPERATE VOICE
Well, Bill, what I got thinking, I didn't want the neighbors to have to find me, this young couple with the boy I want to have my cat, see, Bill?

136. INT. RADIO STATION DAY

BONNER, tough in a grey crewcut, talks on the phone.

BONNER
Okay, baby, now listen, just hold on while I leave the line for a minute. And think about all the kids that are dying overseas for you, okay, baby? Got that? I'll be back in exactly sixty seconds. After this message from...

136. CONTINUED

A taxi horn blasts, interrupting the sponsor's message.

137. EXT. SIXTH AVENUE DAY

Joe's fist slams a fender violently, using Ratso's fake injury trick to stop traffic, running across the street toward...

138. EXT. NEDICK'S DAY

...Ratso staring out at Joe, paralyzed in the act of lighting a cigarette -- intercut in flashing closeups -- Joe outside the window, Ratso inside -- reflecting their conflicting emotions -- Joe's murderous rage -- Ratso's panic -- one almost subliminal flash of each revealing something like pleasure at finding a long-lost friend...

139. INT. NEDICK'S DAY

...Ratso staring up into camera, holding his breath.

RATSO
Don't hit me, I'm a cripple.

Joe's hand falls on Ratso's shoulder.

JOE
Oh, I ain't gonna hit you, I'm gonna strangle you to death...

The cigarette in Ratso's mouth burns into his lip. He jerks spasmodically, choking on smoke as he rips skin away with the butt and drops it in his coffee cup.

JOE
...only first I'm gonna turn you upside down and shake you out right here and now.

Coughing, eyes tearing, Ratso empties his pockets on the counter, finally producing: sixty-four cents, a few sticks

139. CONTINUED

of gum, an almost empty cigarette package, a book of matches and two pawn tickets. He raises his eyes, somehow ashamed. Joe kicks the toe of Ratso's loafer.

JOE
What's in your socks?

RATSO
Not a cent, I swear to God, I swear on my mother's eyes.

Ratso removes his loafers and shakes them, glancing at the counter man. His socks don't even conceal his toes. Disgusted, Joe shoves Ratso's small pile back at him.

RATSO
You keep the sixty-four cents. I want you to have it.

JOE
It's sticky. What you do, slobber on 'em? I wouldn't touch 'em.

Joe should leave -- Ratso obviously has nothing tangible to offer -- but Joe hesitates, lighting a cigarette as Ratso pulls on his loafers.

RATSO
How do you like that O'Daniel, flipping out like that? I wanted to get in touch with you when I heard, but I been laid up with this cold...

Ratso touches his chest, forcing a cough which continues itself beyond his intention.

JOE
You want some free medical advice, shut your goddam mouth about that night.

139. CONTINUED

RATSO
Okay, right, right, okay. Another subject. Where you living? Still at the hotel?

140. INT. ROOM 1014 DAY

The black and white suitcase lies open on the bed.

141. INT. NEDICK'S DAY

Joe turns abruptly and walks away.

JOE
Shee-it. I got better things to do than talk to you.

142. EXT. SIXTH AVENUE DAY

Joe strides north, pretending he doesn't hear...

RATSO'S VOICE
Hey, wait up, for crissake!

...Ratso hop-skipping to overtake Joe at the traffic light.

JOE
Listen, keep away from me, hear? You come near me again, I snatch you bald-headed!

RATSO
I'm inviting you. I mean if you're not located, I got a place. I'm inviting you, goddamit.

JOE
You inviting shee-it.

143. EXT. TENEMENT STREET DAY

A contractor's sign announces LUXURY APARTMENTS AVAILABLE in a high-rise co-op, under construction beyond a row of tenements with X's taped on the windows. Ratso's voice continues over the click-clack-click of Joe's boots and the flip-flap-squeak of Ratso's loafers as camera moves toward a condemned building.

RATSO'S VOICE
The X on the window means the landlord can't collect rent -- which is a convenience, hey? -- on account of it's condemned.

144. INT. TENEMENT STAIRS DAY

Footsteps climb past rubbish piled outside empty flats.

RATSO'S VOICE
The electric's off. Another convenience. I don't mess with Con Edison, hey? What the hell, I got candles, right?

145. INT. X FLAT DAY

Light from the X window shines on a Florida tourist poster as Ratso leads Joe into an abandoned tub-in-kitchen flat, barely furnished with a table and chair, a rumple of blankets on a burnt-out mattress.

RATSO
I got no heat, but by that time, you know, cold weather, hey, I'll be in Florida. Stretch out. Make yourself comfortable. You hungry? I'll put up some water for coffee.

Ratso fills a saucepan from the tub-sink, sets it on a Sterno stove. Joe sits himself on the mattress-bed, pretending to test it, weeks of exhaustion and tension overwhelming him suddenly, his only immediate problem being the effort to restrain a large, comfortable yawn.

145. CONTINUED

JOE
Comfortable, kee-rist, I slept on subways softer than this.

Joe stretches himself, yawning, his eyelids drooping heavily. The sounds of the city recede. Joe's love theme plays softly on a distant radio. Joe's eyes close momentarily in spite of himself.

146. INT. REMEMBERED CAR ANOTHER TIME

A vintage dashboard, radio dial glowing, Anastasia's face.

ANASTASIA
Love me, Joe?

147. EXT. DEMOLITION SITE DAY

A huge metal ball arcs on chain, demolishing a brick facade.

148. INT. X FLAT DAY

Ratso's face seems to radiate evil as he lights a Sterno can. Joe forces his eyes half-open.

JOE
Smart thing for me to do is haul ass outta here.

RATSO
Whatsa matter now?

Joe shivers, pulls a blanket around him, resisting sleep, but the noises of demolition fade, the love theme lures Joe back.

JOE
You don't seem like no fag...

RATSO
What's that supposed to mean?

8. CONTINUED

Joe's eyes close, his voice continuing out of half-sleep.

JOE
Want me to stay here, y'after something. What y'after?

149. INT. REMEMBERED CAR NIGHT

Joe's thumbnail flares a match, exposing Anastasia on the car seat with Joe, both nearly naked. Anastasia butterfly-kisses Joe's chest as he lights a cigarette.

ANASTASIA
Say you love me. Just say it.

JOE
Okay. I love you.

Anastasia purrs as her lips find Joe's breast, trying to nurse. A flashlight flares suddenly through the car window.

150. NIGHTMARE MULTIPLE SPLIT SCREEN

Low angle -- Ratso bending over Joe, into camera...

...Sally Buck shocked, hand still on switch...
...Joe blinded by halation...
...Anastasia's mouth screaming soundlessly...
...flashlights multiplying on car window...

Full frame -- Anastasia catatonic in hospital gown -- a woman's voice "What'd he do to you, Annie?"...

...gang-bang ratpack surrounding car with flashlights...
...Jackie shrieking "He loves her he loves her"...
...hands closing on Joe's buttocks...
...hand closing on Joe's naked left foot...
...hand on naked right foot...
...dentist leaning over Joe's mouth...
...hands pulling Joe's legs apart...

0. CONTINUED

Zoom closeup -- Anastasia screaming soundlessly...

...thermometer under Little Joe's tongue...
...Sally Buck shoves chocolate in her mouth...
...bewigged poodle licks her fingers...
...Sally Buck hangs enema can on bedpost...
...Ratso leads ratpack chasing naked Anastasia...
...corona of flashlights...

Anastasia screaming soundlessly -- flashlight shoved into her mouth -- electronic rock blasting...

...blank-eyed go-go girl in dance hall window...
...Joe held naked by ratpack...
...Ratso breaking beer bottle on Everett's bar...
...dwarf laughing on television...
...Ratso aims broken bottle at Joe's crotch...
...shooting gallery cowboys riddle Joe's pelvis...

Anastasia catatonic in courtroom -- between gaunt parents -- whining singsong "Raped her raped her Joe Buck raped her"...

...Fat Boy's mouth finds Joe's breast, tries to nurse...
...Sally Buck kisses him open-mouthed...
...slug crawls up Joe's stomach, trailing mucus...
...Cass's poodle laps at his toes...
...butterflies settle on his eyes...

Anastasia catatonic in courtroom between parents -- who are now O'Daniel and Sally Buck...

...drawling voice "evidence of repeated violations"...
...Bill Bonner in flag-cloth judge's robe...
...police advancing, swinging night sticks...
...Joe running into Times Square, suddenly naked...
...Anastasia sitting in all-night cafeteria...
...freaky child running toy mouse over her naked body...

Siren screaming -- Anastasia staring catatonic from rear window of ambulance...

150. CONTINUED

...ambulance racing away...
...Joe chasing naked after ambulance...
...running into the arms of the police...
...Ratso laughing as police beat Joe...

151. INT. X FLAT NIGHT

Joe awakens in a cold sweat, fighting the blankets, wild-eyed as he sees Ratso at the table, examining Joe's radio by candlelight. Joe lunges across the room to snatch the radio from Ratso's hands.

RATSO
For crissake!

Still wild-eyed, Joe suddenly points at his stocking feet.

JOE
Where's my boots -- ?

152. EXT. TIMES SQUARE DAY

Joe facing the crowd, naked except for his boots.

153. INT. X FLAT NIGHT

Ratso points to the boots on the floor by the mattress.

JOE
How'd they get off me?

RATSO
I took 'em off.

JOE
What for?

RATSO
So you could s'eep! I mean Christ!

CONTINUED

Joe inspects the boots, seats himself on a battered Army cot -- which has been added while he slept -- swinging a boot by its strap, considering whether to stay or go.

RATSO
I drug in a cot, if you want to stay.

JOE
Well now, Ratso, I'm gonna tell you something for your own good, only first gimme a cigarette.

Ratso offers a cigarette from his crushed package. Joe strikes a match on his thumbnail and lights up, staring at Ratso.

JOE
You want me to stay here tonight, is that the idea?

RATSO
I ain't forcing you, like, I mean, who's forcing you?

JOE
Oh. Guess I got the wrong impression.

Joe makes a slow move to pull on one boot.

RATSO
I want you to stay, okay? I goddam invited you, didn't I?

JOE
Well, I hope you know what you're in for. I'm a very dangerous person. Someone does me bad like you. If I caught up with you that night, there'd be one dead Ratso long about now. Hear?

RATSO
I'm impressed. You're a killer.

3. CONTINUED

JOE
So if you want me to hang around for a few days, I thought you should know.

Joe yawns, picks up a few blankets and spreads them on the cot. He puzzles out the faded printing on one blanket.

JOE
Property of the YMCA. You make me wanna puke sometimes, Ratso.

Ratso blows out the candle and wraps himself in blankets.

RATSO
Joe -- do me one favor -- this is my place, am I wrong? You know, in my own place my name ain't Ratso. I mean it so happens my name is Enrico Salvatore Rizzo.

JOE
Shee-it, man, I can't say all that.

RATSO
Rico then, at least call me Rico in my own goddam place.

JOE
Rico! Rico! Rico! Is that enough?
(then)
And keep your meat hooks off my radio.

154. EXT. VEGETABLE MARKET DAY

Ratso wears a threadbare raincoat of faded black, several sizes too large, as he shops with housewives at a sidewalk vegetable stand -- elbowing his way through the ladies, testing fruit, picking up vegetables and putting them back -- till the GREENGROCER spots him.

154. CONTINUED

GREENGROCER
You! Out! Out! I told you, I calla cops!

The other shoppers deliberately turn their backs, avoiding involvement. As the Greengrocer grabs Ratso, Joe ambles into the scene, wearing his dangerous little smile.

JOE
Hey, looka here, that ain't nice, picking on a cripple...

Joe intervenes just long enough for Ratso to escape, then ambles on, leaving the Greengrocer in frustrated fury. Camera holds on a tray of coconuts.

155. INT. X FLAT DAY

Joe lies on his cot, watching Ratso struggle to penetrate the fibrous husk of a coconut, experimenting with a variety of rusty tools in an old cigar box.

RATSO
The two basic items necessary to sustain life are sunshine and coconut milk. That's a known fact. If I can find the goddam hole the milk squirts out.

JOE
This is an okay setup you got here, but I'd say you ain't just exactly, uh, flush, is that right or not?

RATSO
I been sick. Hold this, willya?

Joe takes his time rising to hold the coconut while Ratso tries to poke a hole with a bent icepick.

55. CONTINUED

RATSO
In Florida, they come smooth, ready to eat. Down there, your only problem is, diet-wise, you gotta lift an arm to wipe warm milk off your chin. Tough, hey?

JOE
I think finding you's the smartest thing I ever did, for both of us. You just the crooked kinda sneaky little sidewinder I need to get me hustling in this town. Hey!

Joe jerks his hand away just in time to avoid the icepick. The coconut bounces on the floor. Ratso picks it up, holds it, while Joe tries to crack it, swinging his boot like a hammer.

RATSO
Miami Beach is the only place for a real hustler. Florida has more rich chicks per square yard than any resort spot in the world. They lie out in their pagodas and pergolas waiting to grab the first jockstrap that passes.

JOE
What's all this sweet talk about Florida? Your friend O'Daniel got a stable down there now?

Joe swings violently. Ratso yelps, hopping on his one good leg, sucking his thumb.

RATSO
Cowboy killers! Break my finger, Christ! I got news for you, baby, no chick with any class buys that big dumb cowboy crap...

Ratso holds his thumb under the tub-sink faucet.

155. CONTINUED

RATSO
...the cowboy bit's out, except among fags of a certain type, which take a certain type hustler to exploit. Like I could handle it -- being a stealing operation basically -- but take your average fag, very few of them want a cripple.

Joe holds the coconut like Yorick's skull, thinking hard.

JOE
Well, I am dumb, that's for sure. I don't talk right. I can't think too good. Just only one thing I ever been good for's loving. Women go crazy for me. Fact. Crazy Annie. Had to send her away. So I don't cash in on that, what am I? I'm shee-it. May's well flush me down that hole with the dishwater.

Joe sets the coconut on the floor, holding it with both hands while he tries to smash it with the heel of his boot.

JOE
That's why you gonna stop crapping about Florida and get your skinny butt moving to earn twenty bucks worth of management you owe me...

156. INT. ROOM 1014 DAY

The suitcase lies open, displaying Joe's wardrobe.

JOE'S VOICE
Make that twenty-three bucks.

INT. X FLAT DAY

Joe slams his heel down. The coconut shoots out from under him and he lands on his ass.

RATSO
Look at yourself, Joe, no offense, but frankly, you're beginning to smell. For a stud in this town that's a handicap.

JOE
You talk like a man with a tin twat.

Ratso sets the coconut on the window sill, balancing it as he raises the X window.

RATSO
You ain't got a chance in hell. You need threads and glitter, baby. A front, hey?

JOE
Well, uh, my manager's gonna manage all that crap, or else he gonna get a coconut up his flue.

Joe slams the window down. The coconut flies down to crash O.S. on the sidewalk below.

158. EXT. SIDEWALK DAY

An alley cat laps up the milk of the broken coconut.

159. EXT. TIMES SQUARE FANTASY

Joe stands naked in the middle of traffic. A siren shrills. Anastasia, catatonic in a hospital smock, moves toward Joe like a sleepwalker, passing through him.

160. INT. LAUNDROMAT DAY

Wearing only his boots, Joe sits like an Indian chief, wrapped in a blanket -- angle widening to show Ratso, spotting Joe's jacket, slacks and shirt with cleaning fluid -- his eyes on a very pregnant Italian lady. As she starts to load a coin cleaning machine, Ratso intervenes solicitously, speaking in Italian...

RATSO
A woman in your condition shouldn't do that. Let me help...

...adroitly slipping Joe's cleaning in with her load as she turns to seat herself beside Joe.

JOE'S VOICE
It ain't right, stealing from a pregnant lady.

161. INT. HAT CLEANERS DAY

Joe and Ratso stand waiting at the counter.

RATSO
What did it cost her? The laundromat syndicate lost a couple coins. I'm crying.

The owner brings Joe's clean and blocked Stetson from the rear of the shop. Joe sets it on his head and examines himself in a mirror as the owner hands Ratso the bill.

RATSO
Where's mine? The black homburg? I brought it in the same time.

The owner glances at the slip, puzzled, returns to the rear of the shop to search for the nonexistent homburg. Ratso quickly drags Joe away from the mirror and out of the shop.

162. INT. SUBWAY ARCADE NIGHT

The rhythmic duet of boots and loafers follows Joe and Ratso -- checking coin boxes and telephone booths -- till they reach a shoeshine stand, locked for the night. They loiter till a young couple has disappeared, then Joe kicks loose the padlock on the equipment drawer, mounts one of the chairs and Ratso goes to work on his boots with furious expertise, flourishing double brushes, snapping the rag like a jazz drummer.

JOE
Hey, you're good! I bet you could pick up a living at this if you tried.

RATSO
And end up a hunchback like my old man? You think I'm crippled? You shoulda caught him the end of a day.

Ratso demonstrates a chimpanzee walk. Joe laughs. Ratso turns back in panic as another man takes a chair next to Joe. Ratso is about to refuse when a cop takes the third chair, swinging his handcuffs around to the front, tapping his shoe with his night stick. Ratso quickly drops a rag over the broken padlock, cursing under his breath as he starts working on all three customers at the same time.

RATSO'S VOICE
You think it's funny?

163. INT. X FLAT DAY

Joe is seated in a straight-back chair near the X window, a towel tucked around his neck as Ratso trims his hair, almost as expert a barber as shoeshine boy.

RATSO
Stupid bastard coughed his lungs out breathing that resin all day. They buried him with gloves on. Even the fag undertaker couldn't get his nails clean.

3. CONTINUED

As if by conditioned reflex, Ratso chokes on the cigarette in his mouth, coughing painfully. He crushes it out, opens the window to spit, shivering, then slams it and turns back to remove the towel from Joe's neck.

JOE
Kee-rist, you pretty damn clever for a skimpy little gimp.

RATSO
You like it? Take a look.

JOE
Don't rush me. How I do it, see, I get myself primed, like I was turning on the charm for some pretty little blonde lady, then kinda mosey away slow and easy and -- swing around! -- and there you are, you handsome devil.

Joe performs his ritual as he speaks, but more relaxed, faintly laughing at himself with Ratso. The wall mirror has been added since we last saw the flat, along with a legless overstuffed chair with burnt-out cushions, a tasselled table cover, pinups, calendar girls and several new Florida tourist posters. Ratso moves to Joe's side, arranging the neckerchief, nodding.

RATSO
Not bad -- for a cowboy -- you're okay, you're okay.

JOE
What I'm gonna do, I'm gonna make a cowboy outta you, kid. How about that? Build you up a little, teach you couple little tricks'n turn y'out to stud, Rat-stuff.

Joe slaps his hat on Ratso's head, tilts it, hooks Ratso's thumbs in his jeans and shoves a cigarette into the corner of Ratso's mouth. Ratso laughs till he chokes -- for one

63. CONTINUED

instant, self-consciously, mimicking Joe -- then removes the hat and reaches for his threadbare black raincoat.

JOE
Okay, you got yourself one handsome, sweet-smelling cowboy, strut your stuff...

64. EXT. CONVERTED TOWN HOUSE DAY

Joe and Ratso peer down through a basement bay window, into the office of THE PERFECT GENTLEMAN ESCORT SERVICE -- endorsed by leading travel agencies and credit clubs -- offering discreet companionship and personal guided tours in any language. A large-busted matron, on a French phone, fills out a memo and hands it to an immaculate young ESCORT, who slips the memo into his topcoat pocket as he comes from the office and hails a cab. Ratso darts forward, limping exaggeratedly, holding the door, lifting the memo as he brushes off the Escort's topcoat. The young man waves him away without a tip. Ratso slams the door and bites his thumb after the cab, unfolding the memo as he joins Joe on the sidewalk.

RATSO
How do you like that? Cheap bastard...
(reads, then)
I think we struck gold. This is one high-class chick. The Barbizon for Women!

65. EXT. MANHATTAN SKYLINE DUSK

The Mutual of New York tower flashes MONY.

66. INT. CORNER PHONE BOOTH DUSK

Ratso consults the memo as he speaks into the phone.

166. CONTINUED

RATSO
Mr. McNeill, I'm calling for Miss Beecham at the Barbizon Hotel for Women. She won't need you tonight...

167. EXT. BARBIZON FOR WOMEN NIGHT

A doorman helps a young lady into a limousine.

RATSO'S VOICE
Would you believe a whole goddam hotel with nothing but lonely chicks?

Joe and Ratso watch from across the street.

RATSO
Score once in that setup, the way chicks talk, Christ...

Joe cracks his gum, tilts his hat, starts across the street.

RATSO
Get the money! Remember Cass Trehune? Cash! These rich bitches write a check at night, call the bank and stop payment in the morning. Get the cash!

In Ratso's eyes -- as Joe enters the hotel -- its facade suddenly wipes away to reveal rich ladies in negligee waiting in every room.

168. INT. BARBIZON FOR WOMEN NIGHT

Joe starts up the stairs, two at a time. A BELLHOP grabs him.

BELLHOP
Hey! No men upstairs!

169. EXT. BARBIZON FOR WOMEN NIGHT

Ratso warms his hands at a chestnut vendor's cart, seeing...

...zoom closeup, a lady in a window grabbing Joe.

170. INT. BARBIZON FOR WOMEN NIGHT

Joe picks up a house phone, watched by the Bellhop.

171. EXT. BARBIZON FOR WOMEN NIGHT

Ratso sees Joe zip from room to room in wild animation.

172. INT. BARBIZON FOR WOMEN NIGHT

The lobby watches Joe blow a gum bubble at the elevator.

173. EXT. EXCLUSIVE DRESS SHOP NIGHT

Staring at a window display of Florida sportswear, Ratso's imagination soars, seeing...

174. EXT. FLORIDA BEACH FRONT FANTASY

...Ratso, like a model in a travel poster, in gaudy sport-shirt, talking on the phone against a background of hotels...

...Ratso like James Bond, surrounded by bikinis, dictating while girls serve coconut milk and massage his game leg...

...Ratso like George Raft, in evening clothes, running a posh casino, flicking a coin...

...Ratso simply himself, dressed as he is, sitting on the beach, at peace in the sun...

...the same identical picture with Joe sitting beside Ratso.

1 INT. BARBIZON FOR WOMEN NIGHT

Joe faces MISS BEECHAM, a reserved and rather plain young lady in evening dress. She tries to speak softly.

MISS BEECHAM
I'm afraid there's been a terrible mistake...

176. EXT. EXCLUSIVE DRESS SHOP NIGHT

Ratso leans against the window, flipping a coin.

177. INT. BARBIZON FOR WOMEN NIGHT

Miss Beecham is flushed with humiliation, the entire lobby watching Joe in the hands of two bellboys.

JOE
I want my money, goddamit, you owe me my money whether you get laid or not, lady, shee-it!

178. EXT. EXCLUSIVE DRESS SHOP NIGHT

The lights in the window suddenly switch off, blacking out Florida. Ratso glances toward the growl of a siren O.S.

179. EXT. BARBIZON FOR WOMEN NIGHT

A police prowl car slows in front of the hotel. Ratso swings across the street with incredible speed to meet Joe as he's tossed onto the sidewalk. Ratso picks up the Stetson and brushes it off, then helps Joe to his feet.

180. EXT. SIXTH AVENUE NIGHT

From a high angle -- the two figures move slowly along the deserted avenue, their rhythmic musical duet growing more and more faint in the distance, a broken grasshopper and a

CONTINUED

six-foot tarnished cowboy -- passing a tuxedo rental store, next to a lighted sign -- TEMPERATURE IN MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA 89 DEGREES -- their pace slowing to a dead stop...

181. INT. X FLAT NIGHT

...Joe and Ratso frozen -- rain on the X windowpane freezing into sheet ice. O.S. a radio commercial plays warm, sentimental music while a cozy voice explains how easy it is to heat with Humble Oil.

182. EXT. CONDEMNED TENEMENTS DAY

Joe and Ratso frozen in a narrow shaft of sunlight, watching the huge metal ball demolish the building next door. O.S. a radio announcer sells FROZEN SUNSHINE ORANGE JUICE.

INT. X FLAT NIGHT

Joe and Ratso frozen, staring significantly at Joe's radio. O.S. a singing commercial, "Don't wheeze and sneeze the winter away! Drink Frozen Sunshine every day!"

184. EXT. PAWN SHOP DAY

Through the window -- Joe and Ratso watch the pawnbroker examine Joe's radio, "Be healthier, wealthier, life can be fine, when you drink Frozen" -- Sunshine is clicked off by the pawnbroker.

185. INT. X FLAT NIGHT

Joe and Ratso frozen, wrapped in blankets as...

...the canned heat dies with a faint puff...

...water dripping in the tub-sink freezes into an icicle...

...the candle burns down and out, leaving the screen dark.

6. EXT. CONDEMNED TENEMENTS DAY

Joe and Ratso warm themselves on the smoke and steam rising from a subway grating -- watching two officials in fur-collared coats inspect the front of their X flat building. Reading their doom, Joe and Ratso continue on, disappearing into the subway.

187. EXT. 42ND STREET NIGHT

Joe stands alone, watching the midnight cowboys ply their trade. Camera pulls back as Joe turns away and enters a store-front blood bank, offering ten dollars to blood donors.

188. INSERT

A huge hypodermic fills the frame, sucking Joe's blood. O.S. Ratso coughs uncontrollably.

9. INT. X FLAT NIGHT

Ratso leans over the tub-sink, dry-heaving while he coughs, wearing a sheepskin coat much too large for him. He controls the cough with effort -- hearing the door open and close O.S. -- wipes his mouth and turns to grin at...

...Joe, trying to light the empty Sterno can, deliberately ignoring Ratso. Ratso shrugs, washes his mouth at the faucet, finds a cigarette butt and lights it, careful to avoid inhaling the first puff.

JOE
Shee-it. Cough yourself inside out, then light a fag, a goddam fag. You make me puke. Where'd you steal it? In the movies?

RATSO
The coat? A guy I did a favor once gave it to me. Christ.

189. CONTINUED

JOE
Who'd you ever do a favor for? You just let some poor bastard freeze to death, wouldn't you?

Joe slams ten dollars on the table. Ratso glances at Joe with curious concern.

RATSO
Where'd that come from?

JOE
Forty-second Street. Where'n hell you think it come from?

RATSO
You wanna know the truth? You dumb bastard, I got it for you. Look at it. Goddam thing's ten sizes too big for me.

Ratso pulls off the coat and throwsit at Joe.

JOE
Wear it yourself. I wouldn't put it on my back.

Joe throws it back at Ratso.

RATSO
Goddamned if I'll wear it!

Ratso hurls it in a corner. Joe shoves the ten at Ratso.

JOE
Go get your medicine. Before you die on my goddam hands...

190. EXT. EAST RIVER BRIDGE DAY

High angle -- Joe and Ratso cross on foot, chilled by wind, neither wearing the sheepskin coat. The Queens riverfront and factories appear cold and bleak, deserted on Sunday.

191. EXT. LONG ISLAND CEMETERIES DAY

Camera moves into acres of tombstones, piled like low-rent housing projects for the dead, the various faiths segregated by crumbling boundaries.

JOE'S VOICE
Shee-it. I hate boneyards.

RATSO'S VOICE
So split. He ain't your goddam father.

192. EXT. PROTESTANT CEMETERY DAY

Ratso leads Joe past a Negro family at a grave -- glances around -- snatches an elaborate floral piece from a headstone and hides it under his black raincoat as he darts toward a low dividing wall and swings himself over into...

193. EXT. CATHOLIC CEMETERY DAY

...an endless section of plain stone markers. Joe touches his hat to two nuns, guiltily hurrying to overtake Ratso at his father's grave, indistinguishable from the other graves except for the name on the headstone. Ratso places the floral piece on the grave with almost absurd solemnity. Joe laughs.

JOE
Kee-rist, you sure are one twisty little bastard, Ratso.

RATSO
The name's Rico, at my own father's grave, a man deserves some respect.

JOE
Respect shee-it! You even steal flowers for his grave.

RATSO
Can he smell the difference, eh?

Joe reads from the ribbon on the floral display.

3. CONTINUED

JOE
Well, uh, he dam well know he ain't 'be-loved Aunt Winifred'.

RATSO
He can't read. Even dumber than you. Couldn't write his own name. X -- that's what it ought to say there on that goddam headstone. One big lousy X like our flat. Condemned. By order of City Hall.

Joe is frowning, standing at the headstone, momentarily depressed with an undefined sorrow.

JOE
My Grammaw Sally Buck, she died without letting me know.

4. EXT. SALLY BUCK'S BEAUTY SALON DAY

Through the window, past the FOR RENT sign, the tarnishing driers are lined up like tombstones.

195. EXT. JEWISH CEMETERY DAY

Joe frowns, puzzled, as Ratso pulls out a black skullcap, leading Joe toward a group of professional mourners, whispering:

RATSO
Just keep your hat on and cry a little. They tip you when it's over.

Joe and Ratso join the mourners as the funeral moves to the grave, Ratso mouthing an authentic double-talk...

...Joe standing self-consciously, aware of the covert glances of the other mourners, automatically reaching up to remove his hat, remembering when Ratso elbows him in the ribs...

CONTINUED

...Joe scowling, tight-lipped, embarrassed by the tip that is thrust in his hand.

196. INT. LUNCH COUNTER EVENING

A weary Santa Claus, in a rented beard and over-large costume, warms his hands over the steam of his coffee cup. Joe and Ratso are arguing farther down the counter.

JOE
Just ain't right, cheating someone dead and can't cheat back.

In the background, as Ratso speaks, HANSEL and GRETEL MAC-ALBERTSON enter the lunch counter, inspecting the customers one by one. Both wear black turtlenecks and jeans, dressed as twins, both blond and pretty.

RATSO
You and my old man. Same kinda mind. Putting me down till the day he died...
(mimics)
...why can't you be like your brothers? Sons a father could be proud of. Yeah, sure. My brothers. Too goddam busy making something of themselves to show up when the old man's dying!

Conditioned reflex, Ratso starts to cough. Joe sees the MacAlbertsons in the mirror, standing behind him, studying him. Gretel nods. Hansel hands Joe a large black card, smiling vaguely, then moves on.

RATSO
What was that all about?

Joe studies the black card, frowning at first, suddenly smiling, turning as if to call after the MacAlbertsons, but they are disappearing around the corner. Joe hands the card to Ratso.

196. CONTINUED

JOE
You wanna read something, read this. I been invited somewhere.

Shocking pink letters on the black card read YOU ARE INVITED TO HELP US BURY LOVE -- TONIGHT AT BROADWAY AND HARMONY LANE -- HANSEL AND GRETEL MACALBERTSON.

JOE
They picked me. The only one in the whole goddam place. You see how they looked me over, up and down before they give me that?

RATSO
So?

Joe sees a young man washing cups behind the counter. Joe shakes his head, wonderingly, turning to study himself in the mirror.

JOE
Well, this thought just struck me. It wasn't too long ago I was washing dishes way the hell somewhere in Texas.

RATSO
Yeah, well, so?

JOE
Now I'm here. I'm in New York City. Getting picked for things. Don't you see what I'm driving at?

RATSO
What you're driving at, you want me to get lost so you can go to your fancy-ass party.

JOE
Did I say that? Did I?
(studies card)
It don't say nothing about you...

196. CONTINUED

RATSO
Don't say nothing about you either.

JOE
But they picked me, right? So what I'll do, I'll just say, now look, you want me? Well, I don't go nowhere without my buddy here.

RATSO
(shrugs)
Well, what the hell, I got nothing better to do.

197. EXT. LOFT BUILDING NIGHT

Snow swirls in the aureole of a street light as Joe and Ratso run, heads lowered, turning into...

198. INT. LOFT BUILDING NIGHT

...a drab entrance hall, dimly lit -- signs identifying various commercial tenants -- a pink-on-black placard reading MACALBERTSON, TWO FLIGHTS UP. Joe has started up before he notices Ratso, leaning on the bannister at the foot of the stairs, struggling to catch his breath. His face and hair are wet with perspiration, his lips lavender-blue.

In swift flashes -- intercut -- Joe reads the panic in Ratso's eyes, so intense that Joe shares it, unable to speak or offer reassurance.

JOE
Better dry your hair some. You sweating all over the goddam place.

Joe pulls out his shirttail, grabs Ratso by the neck and rubs his head dry.

JOE
You got a comb?

198. CONTINUED

RATSO
Don't need a comb.

JOE
Few dozen cooties won't kill me, don't guess.

Joe hands Ratso his own comb. Ratso swipes at his tangled hair angrily until two teeth break in the comb. He hands the comb back, tugs at his hair with his fingers, pats it in place, then looks back into Joe's eyes.

RATSO
Okay? I look okay?

In a moment of silence, distant sounds can be heard -- a siren, the grinding teeth of a garbage truck, the twang of an electric guitar upstairs at the party -- then Ratso makes a quick gesture of impatience and starts up the stairs, pulling himself on the bannister.

199. INT. MACALBERTSONS' LOFT NIGHT

A bank of lights blinds Joe and Ratso as they enter -- electronic rock blasts their ears -- a bearded cameraman on a step-ladder photographs them as they stand confused -- facing a monstrous collage of tabloid photos blown up, showing the murder of a hippie known as Groovy -- in huge black letters, LOVE WAS GROOVY -- GROOVY IS DEAD. Joe shouts over the amplified music.

JOE
Better get a hold of someone and tell them I'm here.

Ratso points to his ear -- he can't hear -- following Joe across the room. The huge loft is crowded with a random selection, gathered to serve as dress extras in an underground film. The party is the scene. The MacAlbertsons merely supply the ingredients and allow it to happen, with cameras strategically placed to record the happening...

199. CONTINUED

...Hansel with tape recorder, Gretel with hand-held camera -- drifting through the crowd -- catching words and images in a detached, whimsical fashion. Gretel turns her camera on Joe and Ratso as they approach.

JOE
Well, I made it. This here is Ratso Rizzo and I...

RATSO
Rico. Rico Rizzo.

Gretel smiles without recognition. Hansel gestures vaguely.

HANSEL
Do you need anything? I mean there's beer and so forth. Whatever your thing is...

The twins move away together, pausing to confer with the operator of a tripod camera -- focused on an emaciated flower girl with long hair and dirty feet, stretched in a sarcophagus, clutching a dead daffodil, her eyes glazed. Scrawled in huge letters on the wall over her head -- LOVE!

RATSO
If you want the word on that brother and sister act, I'll give you the word. That Hansel's a fag and Gretel's got the hots for herself. So who cares, right? Load up on the salami...

Ratso heads for the refreshment table. Joe starts after him but pauses, intrigued by an alcove under the balcony where a light show is in progress -- surreal images of naked bodies projected against abstract currents of color and strobe light...

...a bored fat lady in a muu-muu, squatted like a Buddha at a low table, rolling joints for the guests. She lights a joint and offers it to Joe as he wanders in to watch the show. Joe laughs delightedly when he realizes what it is...

.99. CONTINUED

JOE
Shee-it, this is one helluva party!

...glancing around at the others, imitating their techniques -- the quick inhaler, who follows with sharp gulps of air -- the deep inhalers who draw air as they inhale -- the stylist who lets the smoke drift out and inhales through the nostrils -- Joe puffing himself slightly dizzy, starting to laugh at the silent flick effect of the strobe light -- the action around him slowing almost imperceptibly, overcranked -- a veil of smoke hanging over the fat woman's face, transforming her into a laughing witch -- a similar veil around Joe's head, relaxing the self-conscious tension of his face, spontaneously curious about the play of light on his hand, grinning at...

...a serious young technician handling the light show, scattering psychedelic stars across a sky of magenta flesh...

...Joe reaching for the stars as he rises and wanders back to the crowded loft, fascinated to see...

...a crew with cameras and lights, on the balcony at one end of the loft, photographing the scene below...

...a dark-haired lady by the name of SHIRLEY -- chic in the style of a gangster's moll -- drinking beer from the bottle, predatory eyes searching the crowd...

...Ratso surreptitiously stuffing his pockets from the buffet table, glancing nervously over his shoulder, unaware of Gretel and her hand-held camera, photographing Ratso as he steals, turning away casually, disinterested...

...Joe laughing as he dances for a moment with a tall black girl -- the lights swinging around them -- faces swimming....

...Shirley in fleeting closeup, gone in an instant, reappearing...

200. INT. MACALBERTSON BATHROOM NIGHT

...her face in the mirror smiling in a dark, provocative way -- Joe standing at the bathroom door, forgetting to be embarrassed as Shirley turns away from the mirror, unhurriedly, running her fingers through her hair, boldly meeting Joe's eyes.

SHIRLEY
I can tell, can't you?

JOE
Yeah, oh yeah.

SHIRLEY
What'll we do? Leave now or what? Your place or mine? Oh God, the second I looked at you I knew. Did you?

Joe grins, watching Shirley's lips move, unable to keep her in sync, startled to hear Ratso's voice.

RATSO'S VOICE
She's hooked...

201. INT. MACALBERTSONS' LOFT NIGHT

Joe realizes he is back at the party, Ratso whispering hoarsely.

RATSO
...I'd say she was good for ten bucks, but I'll ask for twenty...

But Joe is watching with terrible fascination as Hansel and Gretel lift the flower girl from her sarcophagus.

SHIRLEY'S VOICE
Did you know? We were going to make it?

Joe glances down to see himself flanked by Ratso and Shirley.

201. CONTINUED

RATSO
You really want to do business?

SHIRLEY
Who's he? Oh God! Don't tell me you two are a couple -- ?

The flower girl, hypnotically dazed, accepts a broom dipped in black paint and smears a huge X across LOVE. Joe laughs.

HANSEL'S VOICE
Why are you laughing, Joe?

Hansel holds a microphone toward Joe, who shrugs, grinning at Ratso and Shirley. Gretel's camera moves down Joe's body.

HANSEL
Are you for real, Joe?

JOE
Well, I ain't a f'real cowboy, but I'm one hell of a stud!

Shirley glances at Ratso, who nods, whispering in her ear.

RATSO
A very expensive stud. And I happen to be his manager.

The scene -- from Joe's viewpoint -- becomes increasingly confusing and fragmented, dialogue and image moving in and out of focus, cameras and lights surrounding him, keeping the center of attention in his own blown mind...

...Shirley's eyes unnaturally bright, inspecting his body, lingering on his thighs, moistening her lips...

SHIRLEY
It's too much -- to come face to face with a walking talking sex fantasy -- to buy a man's -- God!

...the tall black girl dancing in stroble light, starting to remove her clothes -- Gretel following her with a camera...

1. CONTINUED

SHIRLEY'S VOICE
I can't wait to tell my man Monday. I should be taking notes. Look at my arm!

...Shirley's talon-like fingernails caressing the gooseflesh on her tanned arm...

RATSO'S VOICE
I gotta sit down. I feel crummy.

...Ratso stretched out on a Victorian love seat -- the flower girl walking unsteadily, passing out dead daffodils, placing one in Ratso's hand -- Gretel photographing his reaction...

SHIRLEY'S VOICE
Eat it -- a man in your line of work has to keep his strength up...

...Shirley bringing Joe a massive sandwich on a paper plate, watching him bite into it...

SHIRLEY
It's fantastic, now I know, everything you do has sexual implications. If I -- you know, bought it -- could I take pictures of you naked? That's part of it, isn't it, kinky kinda things?

... the tall black girl and a few others are trying to promote an orgy. A scrofulous old wino dances spastically, working his toothless gums, preparing to expose himself to two girls dancing together...

HANSEL'S VOICE
We want you, Joe. You've been chosen.

...five youths stand beside the sarcophagus -- two sailors, two cycle freaks, a weight-lifter -- waiting to be pall-bearers. Joe joins them. All lights and cameras are turned on the slow funeral procession, carrying the flower girl out of the loft to the tune of "Moonlight and Roses". Strobe light adds to the unreality of the scene...

2(. CONTINUED

SHIRLEY'S VOICE
I had a thing for him. Before I knew. Why should knowing make it more of a thing?

...Shirley talks to Gretel as she photographs the funeral.

SHIRLEY
Naturally I'll have to ask myself why a cowboy? And why a cowboy whore? But not tonight.

202. INT. MACALBERTSON LANDING NIGHT

Shirley is pulling her coat out of the pile on the bannister.

SHIRLEY
Incidentally, how much is this going to cost me anyway?

Joe turns to Ratso, whose attention is fixed on the coats.

JOE
Tell her, Ratso.

RATSO
Twenty bucks...

SHIRLEY
Sold. Let's go.

RATSO
...and taxi fare for me.

SHIRLEY
Get lost.

RATSO
I agree. And for that service I charge one dollar taxi fare.

202. CONTINUED

She takes a dollar from her purse and hands it to Ratso, takes Joe's arm and starts down the stairs. Ratso lingers, starting quickly through the coats, frisking them for loose change.

203. INT. LOFT BUILDING LOBBY NIGHT

At the foot of the stairs, Shirley kisses Joe violently.

SHIRLEY
Your name's Joe. Which is fabulous. Joe could be anyone. Kiss me, Joe, move over, Joe, go away, Joe. It's just perfect.

They glance up as Ratso appears, swinging down too rapidly on the bannister. He misses a step and falls -- a clown's fall, unable to stop but apparently not hurting himself. Shirley and Joe are laughing when Ratso lands at the foot of the stairs.

SHIRLEY
He fell. Hey, fella, you fell. Is he all right?

RATSO
(rises, mimics)
Is he all right!

JOE
Well, if you're awright, why you hanging on the bannister. Can you walk or not?

RATSO
Walk? Naturally I can walk.

SHIRLEY
He's got taxi fare.

JOE
Sure you're all right?

203. CONTINUED

RATSO
(shouts)
I said yeah! Yeah, yeah, yeah!

204. INT. TAXICAB NIGHT

Joe and Shirley are kissing. Shirley rolls away, flushed, fanning herself. Joe rolls down the window.

205. EXT. VILLAGE STREET NIGHT

Joe leans out of the taxi window, waving his Stetson, bellowing at the snow.

JOE
Whoopee ti yi yo...!

206. EXT. LOFT BUILDING NIGHT

Ratso makes his way slowly from the building to the curb, whistling between his teeth sharply, hailing a cab. The cab slows to a stop. Then the driver sees Ratso, shifts into gear and drives on. Ratso bites his thumb after the cab, rests for a moment on the lamp post, then starts painfully inching his way along the deserted street.

207. INT. SHIRLEY'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Joe lies on his back, staring fixedly at a fragile mobile hanging from the ceiling, stirring listlessly.

SHIRLEY'S VOICE
That happens. Don't worry about it...

Shirley leans on one elbow, looking at Joe sympathetically, fighting an almost irrepressible desire to laugh. Still avoiding Shirley's eyes, Joe finds a cigarette on the side table, searches for matches.

107. CONTINUED

JOE
Well, that's something never happened to me before, you can bet your bottom dollar. Uh, where's the matches, ma'am?

SHIRLEY
Top drawer. Maybe if you didn't call me ma'am, things would work out better.

Joe finds the matches, lights up and lies back, staring at the mobile as he smokes, still not looking at Shirley.

JOE
First goddam time it ever quit on me. Fact.

The repressed laugh finally breaks through. Shirley stifles it quickly as Joe sits up, looking at her.

JOE
You think I'm lying!

SHIRLEY
(controls herself)
No. Of course not. Just something struck me funny...

Close on Joe -- watching Shirley closely, reacting.

SHIRLEY'S VOICE
I just put myself in your shoes. I had this image of a bugler without a horn, a policeman without a stick, etcetera, etcetera and I...
(giggles)
I think I'd better shut up, I'm making it worse.

Shirley composes her face, reaching out to touch Joe. But that doesn't help either. He reacts sharply.

207. CONTINUED

SHIRLEY
Maybe we should take a little nap, see what happens?

JOE
I ain't sleepy.

SHIRLEY
I know. Scribbage!

Extreme closeup of Joe -- frowning, puzzled...

JOE
Shee-it...

...camera pulling back to show Joe concentrating on a game, spread out on the sheet, consisting of nine dice lettered on all sides, the object being to build as many words as possible, Scrabble fashion, while a sand timer counts the seconds. Shirley watches Joe's efforts to think with sympathetic amusement. The only word Joe has composed so far is MAN.

SHIRLEY
That's pretty Freudian, Joe.

JOE
What? It's a perfectly good word, ain't it. How much time I got?
(glances up)
Goddam sand thing drive you crazy. Kee-rist. Spelling never was a very strong point with me. Even in school.

SHIRLEY
If you didn't talk so much, maybe you could think more.

JOE
Talking helps. Don't talk, you get muddled in your head. Hey! Now you just look at this here!

CONTINUED

Joe spells out MONY, down from the M in MAN.

SHIRLEY
There's an E in MONEY. If that's your word.

JOE
M-O-N-Y -- I'm right! That's just exactly how they spell it up there on that big building, bet you could see it from here. M-O-N-Y.

SHIRLEY
(stifles giggle)
Okay. Never argue with a man.

JOE
Y -- what in hell starts with Y?

Shirley slyly trails the tips of her fingernails across Joe's chest as she leans over to study the game, breathing softly into his ear as she speaks.

SHIRLEY
It can end in Y -- day, pay, lay -- hey, pay lay!

One predatory hand rests on his knee -- as if by accident -- disarranging the sheet, talon nails lightly brushing his thigh.

JOE
Cut it out. That's cheating, teasing me so I can't think. Just one bitsy Y word and I gonna beat you!

SHIRLEY
You gonna beat me, Joe?

JOE
Beat your butt, you don't lemme think!

7. CONTINUED

SHIRLEY
Gay ends in Y. Fey. You like that -- gay fey -- is that your problem?

JOE
I show you what problem --

But the end of his sentence is swallowed by Shirley, taking his kiss in her open mouth, crushed by its impact, an animal noise snarling deep in her throat -- the agonized alley cat wail of pleasure -- Joe's problem is solved. Joe's love theme swells triumphant. At the same time, Shirley half-rises, trying to force Joe's head down, her own on top. The issue is joined. Shirley has named the game. Her objective is to force Joe onto his back. Joe's objective is to retain his initiative. Camera ignores the classic action on the central front, concentrating exclusively on peripheral tactical maneuvers...

...Joe's elbows pinning her shoulders...

...her eyes bright, accepting the challenge...

...his tight smile revealing clenched teeth...

...her fingers searching out then tickling his underarm...

...Joe laughing as he falls lopsidedly...

...Shirley laughing triumphantly...

...his hand closing on her wrist...

...her talon-nails clawing the air...

...her toes walking up his calf...

...her legs suddenly locking around his knees...

...her free hand grabbing his hair...

...her shoulder rising as she forces his head back...

207. CONTINUED

...her lips pressing down on his...

...his hand swatting an unidentified mass of flesh...

...her eyes popping, teeth clamping his ear lobe...

...his hand catching her ankle...

...her teeth losing the ear lobe as she screams...

...her foot appearing upside down beside her face...

...her talon-nails furrowing flesh, drawing blood...

...his head rearing back, roaring...

...both rolling to the floor, out of view...

...her feet suddenly flying up into view...

...her hand tugging rhythmically at the blanket...

...her other hand wildly exploring Joe's back...

...her ankles locking spasmodically...

...her eyes and mouth wide, gaping...

...the blanket suddenly ripping free, flying into the air as her arm flings itself around Joe...

...the bedclothes spilling down around them, muffling her ascending shrieks.

JOE'S VOICE
Whoopee ti yi yo...

208. INT. SHIRLEY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Shirley has difficulty reverting to her nine-to-five role as a Madison Avenue career girl. Half-dressed for work, she

208. CONTINUED

is talking on the telephone, her eyes on the open door to the bathroom, through which Joe's voice continues singing.

SHIRLEY
Well, I really can't talk now, if you know what I mean, but believe me when I say, Myra, it's an experience every emancipated woman owes herself. I'm not. I'm not exaggerating. Well, what's Phil's poker night?
(yells off)
Joe -- are you available next Thursday, eight-thirty?

209. INT. SHIRLEY'S BATHROOM MORNING

Thoroughly shaved, bathed and groomed, Joe is sprinkling an expensive cologne into his boots. He yells back enthusiastically.

JOE
Well, lemme think now, Thursday, eight-thirty, yeah, I guess I could be available. Hell, yeah.

210. INT. SHIRLEY'S BEDROOM MORNING

Shirley turns back to the phone. Joe appears, grinning.

SHIRLEY
Why don't you just come here? I'll be working every night this week. I'll leave a key with the super...

JOE'S VOICE
Well, ma'am -- Shirley -- I sure hate to trouble you, but...

Shirley opens her purse, savoring the moment. As she places the money in Joe's hand...

INT. MEN'S STORE DAY

...Joe slaps a bill on the counter, admiring a fine new cowboy shirt in the mirror, wriggling new white socks into his boots. Suddenly remembering, he goes to the sock rack and buys two pairs, one large and one small. Gradually dominating, Joe's love theme recurs, continuing over...

212. INT. CHAIN DRUG STORE DAY

...Joe slaps down money to pay for an assortment of medicine.

213. INT. CONDEMNED TENEMENT DAY

Joe takes the stairs two at a time to burst in on...

214. INT. X FLAT DAY

...Ratso huddled in the overstuffed chair -- wearing the stolen sheepskin coat -- wrapped in blankets, his teeth chattering, in spite of the sweat on his forehead. Joe stops abruptly, his mood shattered by Ratso's alarming condition. They simply stare at each other for a moment, then Joe turns away to see soup heating on the Sterno stove. Joe tosses one of his paper bags onto Ratso's lap...

JOE
See what you think of that crap. I'll pour your soup. Got some of that junk you like to swill, too. Mentholatum. Aspirin. All that shee-it...

Ratso opens the paper bag, trying to control his shivering, pulling out the socks and a suit of long underwear. He sees Joe watching him for a reaction. The best Ratso can do is a slight shake of his head.

JOE
They wrong?

4. CONTINUED

RATSO
No. But while you was buying the underwear, I could have lifted the socks.

JOE
You couldn't lift fly specks from a sugar bowl. Can you hold this?

Joe hands Ratso the soup. Ratso seems steadied by the warmth in his hands. He nods, sipping the soup.

RATSO
But thanks.
(hesitates, then)
Hey, Joe, don't get sore about this or anything. You promise?

JOE
Yeah.

RATSO
Well, I don't think I can walk.
(embarrassed)
I mean, I been falling down a lot and, uh...

JOE
And what?

RATSO
I'm scared.

JOE
What of?

RATSO
What'll happen. I mean what they do to, you know, do with you -- if you can't -- ah, Christ!

JOE
Who?

14. CONTINUED

RATSO
I don't know. Cops. Or the -- how should I know?

Ratso is trembling so violently that the soup starts to slop over. Joe takes it and sets it on the table.

JOE
Okay. Here it is. You gonna go see the doctor. I got nine bucks and twenty more Thursday and I gonna be riding high before you know it. So you gonna get you the best goddam doctor in this town and get yourself straightened out, that's what.

RATSO
No doctors. No, sir. Not me. Doctors are like goddam auto mechanics. Fix one thing, unplug another. Operate for piles and while they're there, they unscrew your liver. My old man, for God's sake, wasn't any sicker'n I am when he went to the doctor.

JOE
Well, just exactly what the hell you think you're gonna do? Die on me?

RATSO
I'm going to Florida, that's my only chance.

JOE
You know what's wrong with you? You got fevers. You kinky as a bedbug. How you gonna get to Florida?

214. CONTINUED

RATSO
I'll find the money. If you just get me on the bus, that's all I ask.

JOE
Just when everything's going my way, you gotta pull a stunt like this.

RATSO
I don't even want you to go. Whaddya think of that? I got other plans for my life than dragging around some dumb cowboy that thinks he's God's gift to women. One twenty-buck trick and he's already the biggest stud in New York City. It's laughable.

Joe sets his Stetson on his head.

JOE
When I put you on that bus down to Florida tonight, that'll be the happiest day of my life!

215. INT. PHONE BOOTH DAY

Joe strikes a match with his thumbnail and watches it curl away while he waits, hearing a phone ring. Then the phone is answered by a woman's voice.

JOE
Hey, Shirley...Miss who? Oh, yeah, well, when will Missus Gardner be home? ...I'm a friend of hers, a goddam good friend... Shee-it, I can't wait till then...

Joe hangs up while the answering service's voice is still talking. The match has burned out. Joe flips it away.

216. INSERT

Headline -- WALTER P. BOX TAKES NEW YORK BY SURPRISE!

217. EXT. TIMES SQUARE DUSK

Joe loiters outside a gag headline print shop, his eyes following a man in homburg and chesterfield.

218. EXT./INT. METROPOLE DUSK

Joe lingers momentarily, identifying with the violence in a jazz drummer, his eyes searching for a pickup.

219. INT. ARCADE DUSK

Joe tests his skills in a shoot-down with a large metal cowboy and kills him, a recorded voice speaks, "Got me!" as the cowboy slumps. Joe glances off as he hears polite applause...

TOWNY'S VOICE

Bravo...

...TOWNY -- a stout, round-faced man -- clasps Joe's hand between both of his own, like an old friend.

TOWNY

How are you?
(more quietly)
Townsend P. Locke, from Chicago.
Call me Towny. I'm here to attend
a paper manufacturers' convention
and, frankly, to have a little fun,
dammit...

Towny grips Joe's elbow, almost forcibly leading him away.

220. EXT. SIDE STREET WEST OF BROADWAY DUSK

Towny's face appears huge at Joe's shoulder.

220. CONTINUED

TOWNY
This is my first night in town and I'll consider it a ghastly omen clouding my entire ten days, if you don't consent to have dinner with me. Anywhere you like...

Towny's mouth continues speaking at an incredible rate, but his words are drowned out momentarily by the grinder of a sanitation truck, chewing up a discarded Christmas tree with tinsel clinging to it. Towny is still talking when they've passed the truck.

TOWNY
...never mind how you're dressed. They know me. I'll say you're with the rodeo. There's always a rodeo in New York, dammit. Besides, you look very elegant...

221. EXT. STREET CORNER NIGHT

Joe hardly notices O'Daniel on a far corner, his whining scarcely audible. "Ye are the salt of the earth," Jesus said, but if the salt hath lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?"

TOWNY
But, dammit all, I just remembered, we'll have to eat in my room because I have this phone call coming at nine-thirty...

222. INT. TOWNY'S HOTEL ELEVATOR NIGHT

An ancient open cage lift.

TOWNY
What I like about you, you're such a wonderful conversationalist. So won't that be nice to have dinner sent up?

223. INT. TOWNY'S HOTEL CORRIDOR NIGHT

A threadbare, carpeted but spacious hallway.

TOWNY
Fifty years ago this was the only hotel in Manhattan. My mother always calls me at her bedtime, so I've got to be there.

224. INT. TOWNY'S BEDROOM-SITTING ROOM NIGHT

The room has little to recommend it except its size and large French window, through which -- ignored by Joe -- the Mutual tower flashes MONY! Towny waves Joe toward the couch, quickly slipping several physical culture magazines from the coffee table onto a shelf beneath.

TOWNY
A drink? I've got some nice gin. If you'd prefer something else, they'll send it up...

JOE
Gin's okay.

TOWNY
It's so exciting. New York. The mad forward thrust of everything. My sense of time here is completely altered.

225. INT. TENEMENT STAIRS DAY

Joe carries Ratso down the stairs, wrapped in a blanket.

226. INT. TOWNY'S BEDROOM-SITTING ROOM NIGHT

The coffee table is littered with empty cartons of Chinese food, soaked through with brown sauce. Joe finds the last egg roll and eats it as Towny's voice drones on.

226. CONTINUED

TOWNY
Sometimes it seems to me time stopped twenty years ago. There was this war, there was this handsome young man with quite black hair and he was supposed to die. But he didn't. Isn't that amusing?

JOE
What?

Towny's dialogue moves out of sync. Towny's eyes seem to look into camera -- from Joe's viewpoint -- but slightly past it. The quality of the scene grows increasingly disjointed as Joe glances around the room, looking for something to steal, losing personal contact with Towny, viewing him as an object to be used for a specific purpose.

TOWNY
Enough about me. I'm through talking for the evening. Now I want to hear about conditions in the West. The romance of the West holds a tremendous power over me. Mother was actually a pioneer woman, can you believe it? When she calls, I'll introduce you and she'll be so thrilled.

227. EXT. TENEMENT NEIGHBORHOOD DAY

Ratso sits on a stoop while Joe hails a cab.

228. INT. TOWNY'S BATHROOM NIGHT

Towny's voice is only a shrill monotone from here. Joe searches with increasing desperation for something of value. An old electric razor is too bulky for Joe's pocket, probably worthless anyhow. Towny's array of medicines merely recalls Joe's purpose.

CONTINUED

TOWNY'S VOICE
Mama, a coincidence. Guess who was being discussed. Discussed. Not disgusted. Discussed! Do you have that thing turned up? Why aren't you wearing it! This is impossible!

229. EXT. GREYHOUND BUS TERMINAL DAY

Joe lifts Ratso from the taxi and carries him inside.

JOE'S VOICE
Listen, Towny, did I mention I got a sick kid?

230. INT. TOWNY'S BATHROOM NIGHT

Joe is rehearsing the speech in the bathroom mirror.

JOE
Well, he is, he's sicker'n shee-it. And I've gotta get him South quick as I can...

231. INT. GREYHOUND BUS TERMINAL DAY

Joe stands in a long line, glancing impatiently at the clock while Ratso waits on a bench, wrapped in his blanket.

232. INT. TOWNY'S BEDROOM-SITTING ROOM NIGHT

Towny is stretched out on the couch, staring morosely.

TOWNY
I was so childish with her.

Joe moves into frame past camera, standing in front of him, so that we can see the scene from behind Joe's waist.

232. CONTINUED

JOE
What d'you want?

TOWNY
What?

JOE
What you got me up here for?

TOWNY
Oh, difficult, it's so difficult. You're a nice person, Joe -- I should never have asked you up -- a lovely person. Oh, how I loathe life. I loathe it. Please go. Please.

JOE
You want me to leave?

TOWNY
No, yes. No, I mean yes please go. Help me to be good. Come back tomorrow. Promise.

JOE
I'm going to Florida.

TOWNY
This is terrible. I meet someone who -- then -- wait, I want to give you a present. For your trip. You'll let me please...

233. INT. GREYHOUND BUS TERMINAL DAY

Joe's face is expectant, next in line at the ticket window. He nods reassuringly toward Ratso.

234. INT. TOWNY'S BEDROOM-SITTING ROOM NIGHT

Joe's face is puzzled then angry as Towny takes a Saint Christopher medal from his ack and hands it to Joe. His eyes are looking past Joe, his speech out of sync.

TOWNY
Please take it. You don't have to be Catholic. Saint Christopher is the patron saint of all travelers. I want you to have it. For helping me be good.

235. INT. GREYHOUND BUS TERMINAL DAY

It's Joe's turn. The clerk looks at him expectantly.

236. INT. TOWNY'S BEDROOM-SITTING ROOM NIGHT

Joe's voice is angry.

JOE
Listen, I gotta have money.

TOWNY
Oh. Yes. Of course. I should have thought. You shouldn't have to ask. That was thoughtless of me. Yes. Wait here...

Towny hurries across the room to the bedside table. Beside the telephone is a picture of a prosperous pioneer woman wearing a hearing-aid. Towny tries to conceal his movements as he takes a wallet from the drawer, lifts out a bill and tucks the wallet back and turns -- terrified to see Joe close behind him -- almost knocking the lamp off the table in his fright. Pressed against the table, protecting but calling attention to his wallet, Towny holds out the bill.

TOWNY
Here. Don't even thank me.

236. CONTINUED

TOWNY
Here. Don't even thank me.

JOE
(takes the bill)
I gotta have more'n ten. I gotta have fifty-seven dollars.

TOWNY
I simply don't have it, Joe.

JOE
Get outta my way.

TOWNY
You're wasting your time. There's nothing in there.

Towny clutches the table, staring at Joe, shaking his head like a bad little boy. Joe backhands him angrily. Trying to duck the blow, Towny stumbles and slips to the floor, but grabs the table in his arms, watching Joe out of the corner of his eyes, whimpering. Joe grabs his hair, turning his face up.

JOE
Let go. Let go of the table.

Joe slaps him, but Towny clings more fiercely to the table as Joe tries to jerk it free. Joe strikes him with his fist.

TOWNY
I deserved that, I know I did.

But he clutches the table wildly. His mother's picture falls unnoticed. Joe stands in panic, sickened, unable to fulfill the role Towny has assigned him.

TOWNY
I brought this on myself. I'm bleeding, my nose is bleeding, isn't it?

236. CONTINUED

Towny's eyes shine, teeth clenched in a crazy smile, blood trickling from his nose. Suddenly Joe jerks the lamp free of its socket.

JOE
You wanna gimme fifty-seven dollars or you wanna busted skull?

Towny simply stares at the lamp.

JOE
Please let go of that table.

Joe threatens, swings the lamp down, but stops short of hitting Towny. Towny shrieks -- eyes rolling back as he falls limp -- loosing his grip on the table, leaning on the bed, laughing and crying hysterically. Joe has to step over him to reach the wallet in the drawer. He takes all the money -- probably twice what he needs -- desperate to get out of the room.

237. INT. GREYHOUND BUS TERMINAL DAY

Joe carries Ratso up the steps onto the bus.

238. INT. TOWNY'S BEDROOM-SITTING ROOM NIGHT

Towny's shrill little whisper says...

TOWNY
Thank you, Joe.

...provoking Joe to glance back. Towny is reaching for the telephone, his eyes on Joe with wild brightness, holding his hand on the receiver. Joe knocks the phone from his hand, hits Towny in the mouth, jerks the cord from the wall as Towny falls -- gagging -- finally dislodging his dentures on the carpet. Joe stands sick and confused, holding the useless phone in two hands...

239. EXT. GREYHOUND BUS TERMINAL DAY

The bus driver revs the powerful engine, shifting gears.

240. INT. TOWNY'S BEDROOM-SITTING ROOM NIGHT

...Joe is about to hang the dead receiver on its hook when -- on sudden impulse -- he shoves the small end of the receiver into the toothless mouth of the man on the floor.

241. EXT. LINCOLN TUNNEL DAY

The bus roars into the tunnel.

242. INT. GREYHOUND BUS DAY

Joe and Ratso sit near the rear of the bus. Ratso's teeth chatter, wrapped in the blanket.

RATSO
Thirty-one hours.

They ride a few moments in silence.

RATSO
The trip is. Nine-thirty in the morning we get there. Not this morning but the next one at nine-thirty.

Both nod for a moment in silence.

JOE
These guys're good drivers.

RATSO
They gotta be.

JOE
Yeah.

243. EXT. HIGHWAY DAY

The bus tires sing as it speeds South.

244. INT. GREYHOUND BUS DAY

Joe and Ratso have reversed places, putting Ratso by the window. Joe watches a middle-aged couple try on their new straw hats, unaware that Joe is watching them.

RATSO
You get your first palm tree in South Carolina.

JOE
How'n hell a dumb Bronx kid like you know that?

RATSO
I read it.

JOE
Shee-it. You believe all you read?

245. EXT. BRIDGE NIGHT

The metal grating rings as the bus soars onto it.

246. INT. GREYHOUND BUS NIGHT

Two aging young ladies in brand-new resort wear are casually examining Joe, along with the other men on the bus, but Joe is frowning at Ratso, who shivers despite the bright sun.

JOE
If you have to shiver, why don't you pull the blanket up more?

246. CONTINUED

RATSO
I been thinking. I hope we're not gonna have a lotta trouble about my name down there. Because like what's the whole point of this trip anyway?

JOE
Keep the goddam blanket on.

RATSO
I mean New York's one thing, but can you see this guy, imagine it, running around the goddam beach all suntan and he's going in swimming, like, and then somebody yells 'Hey, Ratso' -- how does that sound to you?

JOE
Sounds like they knew you.

RATSO
Sounds like crap, admit it. And I'm not gonna have it. I'm Rico all the time, okay, do you blame me? That's agreed, okay? We're gonna tell all these new people my name's Rico?

Joe nods. Ratso closes his eyes, momentarily at peace.

247. EXT. HIGHWAY DAWN

The bus passes a Florida hotel sign too swiftly to read it.

248. INT. GREYHOUND BUS DAWN

Joe frowns in his sleep, awakens, lifts his Stetson to see Ratso wide awake, in misery, wiping tears from his eyes.

JOE
Hey -- whatsa matter?

248. CONTINUED

RATSO
(barely audible)
I'm wet.

JOE
You're what?

RATSO
I wet my pants! My seat's all wet!

JOE
Hell, don't cry about it!

RATSO
Here I am going to Florida and my leg hurts, my butt hurts, my chest hurts, my face hurts, and like that ain't enough, I gotta pee all over myself.

Joe laughs suddenly, uncontrollably.

RATSO
I'm falling apart, that's funny?

JOE
(nods, laughing)
You just -- just -- what happened, you just had a little rest stop wasn't on the schedule.

Ratso begins to laugh with Joe as if it were the funniest thing they'd ever heard. Then Ratso's face pales as he starts to choke and cough. Joe pats him on the back.

JOE
Hey, what size pants you wear?

249. EXT. SMALL TOWN STREET DAY

The bus is parked in the distance. Joe comes from a clothing store, bare-headed, wearing plain slacks and sportshirt. He carries the boots, Stetson and cowboy suit in one hand, a

49. CONTINUED

bundle under his arm. He dumps his cowboy regalia in the trash bin of a sandwich stand and calls to the WAITRESS.

JOE
Couple crullers'n coffee to go.

The Waitress draws coffee, wraps crullers.

WAITRESS
Where you from?

JOE
New York.

Joe pays. She smiles, gives him change. Joe smiles, starts on toward the bus, hardly aware that he has accomplished something rare and remarkable for Joe -- a simple human contact without fear or threat, a pleasant everyday happening.

50. INT. GREYHOUND BUS DAY

Joe and Ratso have moved to the seat farthest back, wider than the others. Joe blocks the view of the other passengers as he helps Ratso into a new pair of corduroy pants and a Florida shirt. In the middle of the operation, Ratso dozes off. Joe shakes his head, scowling, annoyed, but continues, lifting Ratso enough to slide the pants around his waist. Ratso awakens as Joe zips the fly.

RATSO
Hey, what the hell you doing?

JOE
I'm zipping your fly, what the hell you think I'm doing?

They both smile. It isn't funny enough to laugh at. Joe arranges the blanket, takes out a package of cigarettes, glances at Ratso and puts it away.

251. EXT. TRAVELING SHOT WITH BUS DAY

Palm trees are streaking past the window. The sun is glaring hot. A group of kids in bare feet and straw hats wave to the bus as it passes.

252. INT. GREYHOUND BUS DAY

Ratso's eyes squint in a dazed half-sleep. Joe leans across to pull down the shade. He hesitates a moment, watching...

...past his reflection, a group of young men on their way to work, carrying lunch pails, dressed exactly as Joe is now dressed...

...then Joe lowers the blind and seats himself. Ratso nods slightly, his voice practically inaudible.

RATSO
Thanks, Joe.

JOE
Shee-it, you know, I got this thing all figured out, Ratso. I mean Rico. When we get to Miami, what I'll do, I'll go to work. I gotta do that, 'cause see, I ain't no kind of a hustler. I ain't even any goddam good as a bum. I'm a nothing, that's what I am. So reckon I'd better go to work and get me a goddam job. Okay?

Joe glances at Ratso, but there is no response. Surreptitiously, Joe takes out a cigarette, turns his face away from Ratso and lights it, hiding it cupped in his hand as he smokes.

JOE
Yeah, guess that's what I'm gonna do.

252. CONTINUED

They ride for a moment in semi-darkness, Joe smoking, looking at the other people on the bus, brighter without the shades down. Joe turns, checking the blanket around Ratso, noticing that Ratso is sitting in a peculiarly stiff, awkward position. Joe leans over to straighten Ratso's head, blocking our view for a moment. Then Joe leans back, frowning, thoughtful. We still do not see Ratso's face. Joe rises slowly, starting forward in the bus...

...passing an older couple, a schoolgirl, two ladies with straw hats, a young man trying to read, pausing when he reaches...

...the DRIVER, staring out at the Sunshine Parkway with the Driver, leaning over so he won't have to speak too loudly.

DRIVER
Yes, sir?

JOE
My friend's dead in the back seat.

DRIVER
Your friend's what in the back seat?

JOE
Dead. Dead as a doornail.

DRIVER
Is this some kind of...

He glances at Joe, then pulls off the road and stands up.

DRIVER
Okay, folks, everything's fine.
Nothing to worry about.

The passengers crane their necks as Joe follows the Driver to the rear of the bus. The passengers at the rear are staring ahead, trying not to see what is going on. The Driver touches Ratso, straightens, touches his hat, but doesn't remove it.

252. CONTINUED

DRIVER
Is he kin to you?

Joe nods no.

DRIVER
Don't you want to close his eyes?

JOE
Close them?

DRIVER
Just reach over and close them.
That's all.

Joe closes Ratso's eyes.

DRIVER
I guess we'll just drive on,
right? Nothing else to do.

JOE
No, sir. Not till Miami. I'll
see to burying then.

The Driver moves to the front and turns to the passengers.

DRIVER
Just a little sickness, folks,
nothing serious. We'll be in
Miami...
(looks at watch)
...in forty minutes.

253. INT. GREYHOUND BUS DAY

Joe sits stiffly, very frightened, as the bus starts on. Then he glances at Ratso, frowning, reaches out an arm and puts it around Ratso, settling back, staring straight ahead.